

To Mr. Haydon 2110
CONSTANTIA NEVILLE;

OR,

THE WEST INDIAN.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

HELENA WELLS,

AUTHOR OF "THE STEP-MOTHER," &c.

—————Behold the ways
Of Heaven's eternal destiny to man,
For ever just, benevolent and wise:
That *Virtue's* awful steps, how'er pursued
By vexing Fortune and intrusive pain,
Should never be divided from her chaste,
Her fair attendant, *Pleasure*.

AKENSIDE.

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CONSTANTIA NEVILLE;

OR,

THE WEST INDIAN.

CHAP. XIII.

There is certainly no such comfort under the evils of this life, as a faithful witness in our breasts of our own innocency and integrity.

TILLOTSON.

ROUZED by the first dawn of light that gleamed through the shutters of her bed-chamber window, Miss Neville hastily arose to prepare for an early removal, not doubting that before the day was far advanced, either her brother, or Somers, would call in Port-

man-square, to accompany her to the house of the latter, where she hoped to be secure from all intrusion, and to forget that such a creature as Rochford inhabited the same country, and breathed the same air with herself. To communicate her intentions to Mrs. Rochford, was not the pleasantest part of what she had to go through, previous to changing her residence. The remonstrances of this lady, on the precipitation which marked the proceedings of her friend, would have had their effect, but for the powerful reasons that impelled her to depart from a house of which her false friend was the master.

The firm resolves of Constantia surprised, as much as they displeased, Mrs. Rochford. Unable to discern why she chose to quit her protection till her brother had a house ready to receive her, she forbore to make another remark, silently acquiescing in what

she considered a proof of folly and the height of ingratitude, for the favours bestowed. The assistance of Miss Neville's taste in decoration, happened now to be an object of importance, Mrs. Rochford soon intending to give a ball and supper, which she was ambitious should rival, in elegance, her own masquerade. Unmindful of former services, she thought only of those that were withheld, and to a heart bleeding at the recollection of departed enjoyments, she would have expatiated on the delights of crowded rooms, and the hopes which she indulged, that her assemblies would become the resort of all that were considered the leaders of fashion and the directors of the public taste.

On the introduction of the brother of Constantia, her friend regained a little good-humour. The easy address and unconstrained air of the handsome Creole, while he thanked Mrs. Roch-

ford, in appropriate language, for the protection she had afforded his sister, failed not to make a due impression. Unaccustomed to the assumed indifference of the man of fashion, and possessing, in an uncommon degree, the arts of insinuation, Montagu Neville would have had little trouble in succeeding with the fair, had not a volatility of disposition and natural indolence prevented him from pursuing the advantages that it cost him no effort to obtain. Mrs. Rochford, unable to retain her guests, parted from them with extreme reluctance, assuring both, that the sooner they returned to Portman-square, the happier she would be to see them.

The bidding adieu to her sweet pupil, Georgiana, was to Miss Neville a trial of the severest kind. To its nurse she gave an infinite number of charges, and a promise of reward proportioned to the attention paid to the child. To

none of the servants did she hint the little probability of her again becoming an inmate of their master's house. They considered her absence as a temporary one, or their regrets at her departure would have been loudly expressed, for to all had she endeared herself by her condescension and affability, without having, in the smallest degree, relaxed from the dignity which it was proper for her to support.

The high strain of her brother's conversation not a little perplexed Constantia. During their ride to the New Road, he talked of returning the civilities of Mr. and Mrs. Rochford, and that whenever settled in Bloomsbury-square, he should make a dinner party on purpose to entertain them. Unwilling to check his spirits by asking the simple but unanswerable question of,—Where, Montagu, are you to find funds to support an establishment adequate to the appearance of my father's

house? She hastened to assure him, that, with her consent, no such entertainment should be projected, she having frequently heard both Mr. and Mrs. Rochford laugh at the citizens and half-bred gentry, who having taken their first flight from Portsoken-ward to the vicinity of Bedford House, attempt to give dinners to people of fashion, which, though costly enough, were either spoiled in the cooking, or the dishes suffered to remain unserved till their contents were cold, from want of a proper number of attendants for the accommodation of the company present.

Arrived at the small, but exquisitely neat habitation of Somers, Constantia breathed more freely. The shocks she had received, and the irreparable loss she had lately sustained, were now, however, felt in their full force; the care-worn countenance of the master of the humble abode, and the friendly

solicitude he expressed respecting her health and peace of mind, while it assured her that she would meet every possible attention that her situation required, conveyed to her heart doubts, as to the propriety of Montagu's plans of life, and fears that his former proceedings would not bear the investigation which rigid creditors would think necessary to make. The eldest daughter of Mrs. Somers, a girl of fourteen years old, who had been three years absent at a school many miles distant from the metropolis, now offered her services, and begged in her mother's absence (who had gone abroad on indispensable business) to attend Miss Neville to her room.

Promising to return in the evening, Montagu took a hasty leave, saying he had made an engagement to dine with some of his fellow-passengers at the London Coffee-house, where he had slept the preceding night; but in his

way to Portman-square, he had looked at an apartment in King-street, Holborn, to which place he should direct his baggage to be sent, as he did not think he could suit himself better. No advice being necessary where a determination is taken, Somers, whatever he thought, bowed his assent as to the eligibility of the situation and the expediency of the measure.

Constantia had scarcely time, with the assistance of her young attendant, to arrange her apartment, when Mr. Somers returning from shewing her brother the nearest road to 'Change, sent one of his sons up to her door, to request she would come down to the parlour, as he wished to talk with her. After some conversation on the subject of remittances, Somers came immediately to the point, asking with some earnestness, what could have induced her to quit Mrs. Rochford's house, when the state of her affairs required

as much attention in regard to saving unnecessary expenditure, as they had ever done? " Yet," continued he, " Mr. Neville tells me you have resolved to reside in the house in Bloomsbury-square, and I supposed he would have ordered his baggage thither, when, to my utter astonishment, in your presence, he said he had taken a lodging in King-street, which may be in a respectable house, but I am confident he knows nothing of the character of the people who keep it, though he intends so instantly to entrust to their care valuable property."

Unaccustomed to the language of reprehension, Miss Neville felt it most keenly when coming from a person so entitled to respect from his worth, and so little likely to use it but from an impulse of duty. The tears flowed while she declared that her removal from Mr. Rochford's house was so absolutely necessary, that it had been resolved upon

some hours previous to the arrival of her brother. Feeling it impossible to communicate the reasons that influenced her conduct in forming such a resolution, she disclaimed all intention of joining her brother in any scheme of living, beyond what prudence and economy should dictate to be consistent with his views in life ; of this she was certain, that he would be more likely to receive the countenance of her father's friends, by setting out on a very moderate scale, than by any other plan he could adopt. He had, it was true, hinted as they came along, that he should like to settle in the house formerly occupied by her father, to which proposal she had not time to state her objections, though she meant that very evening, or the next morning, to converse most fully with him on that and other subjects.

This avowal, though only partially made, of the motives by which she was

actuated, restored Miss Neville to the good opinion of Somers, who sincerely begged her pardon for having doubted her prudence. Mrs. Somers coming in, the family sat down to their frugal meal, from which they arose, thankful to that Being from whose unspeakable goodness we derive all the blessings of this life. Mr. Montagu, to keep his promise of visiting his sister in the evening, was obliged to drive from Ludgate Hill, to the New Road, in a hackney-coach, which he was under the necessity of keeping while he staid, to convey him from thence to King-street, having just dispatched a ticket-porter in another, with his trunks to the same place. With unfeigned sorrow did the sister mark this useless profusion of the brother. Hoping to find the morning a more propitious season for a conference than the present appeared to be, Constantia begged to see him as early as possible, for she

had much to communicate, that it was necessary he should know, previous to his meeting those who had interested themselves in their concerns. This request appeared so reasonable, that notwithstanding the distance of which he had just been complaining, he offered to take his breakfast with Mrs. Somers, who in reply said, with great good-humour, " he should have his tea and coffee at any hour he chose to come for it, but her husband was so early a riser, that herself, and all her family, would have taken their first meal long before they could expect to have the pleasure of seeing him."

" Well, well," says Montagu, " I see how it is, Mrs. Somers, you have no mind to be troubled with me ; I shall be here as soon as I can get drest, will that do ?" Anxious for his departure, as early hours in a morning require the same at night, and the usual time of the family retiring to rest being past,

Constantia bade her brother good night, and desired him to come as early as he could, for he might as well be at Barbadoes, if she could enjoy no more of his company than she had done since his arrival. Pleased with this remark, “ he declared it was worth crossing the seas to get acquainted with such a sensible woman, though she did happen to be his sister.”

When Mr. Neville made his appearance the next morning, he began to inveigh most bitterly on the extortionate demands that since his arrival in England he had been compelled to comply with. On examining his purse, when the fumes of Madeira were evaporated by a night’s rest, he was surprised to find the expences of the preceding day had drained it so completely. This was an excellent opportunity for his sister to read him a lecture on frugality and temperance. He felt the force of her arguments, and acknowledged the

impossibility of keeping house in London, and entertaining company, without a much larger sum being expended annually, than he had any reason to expect he could afford for some years to come. This point gained, Constan-
 tia suggested the propriety of disposing of the lease and best furniture of the house, reserving the plate and linen, with some necessary articles, which though not of much value, with a trifling addition, would furnish any house inhabited by them. " These things," he said, " should be left entirely to her better judgment, he must shew himself at the accompting-house, and see what could be done there. His bills, though of long dates, were all good, and he hoped to clear off old scores with so good a grace, that he should enter the 'Change of London, supported by the same persons that had given stability to the house when conducted by his father." These expla-

nations terminating to their mutual satisfaction, it was agreed that till some mercantile engagements were fulfilled, and others entered into, it would be premature to form any regular establishment; they must see each other as often as business permitted, and take care to pay Somers liberally for the inconvenience to which his family might on their account be subjected.

Released from a great part of her anxieties, in a few days Constantia thought it requisite to enquire after Mrs. Rochford, who, however, spared her the trouble of writing, by taking a ride with the nurse and child to see her. This visit would have been gladly dispensed with by the person to whom it was paid; who was now in plain terms obliged to declare, that it was inconsistent with her notions of propriety, to mix in circles so superior to that to which it was well known she belonged; neither the dictates of her inclination, nor

a regard to health, would admit of her keeping the late hours, which she was well aware would be adopted on Mr. Rochford's return, when the season for giving entertainments at home, and attending public and private assemblies abroad, would commence.

Mrs. Rochford, not a little piqued at all this, said, "she could surely come and pass a day with her *en famille*; the distance need not operate to prevent her, as she would send the nurse and child in the carriage to fetch her one forenoon, and bring her home herself on the next." Unable to reply in the affirmative, Constantia was under the cruel necessity of saying, that her determinations were unalterable; to be seen in Portman-square, without making her place of residence known to those who, perhaps, from motives of curiosity chose to ask it, would be most unpleasant; and yet to which of the ladies of Mrs. Rochford's acquaintance

could she communicate her present situation?"

"I am convinced," said Mrs. Rochford, bursting into tears "you have no regard for me, or you would not have left me by myself the moment your brother came. My mother says she is certain I must have given you some offence; I am sure if I did, I never meant it; so I hope if you will not come and see *me*, you will at least tell me why you are angry with me."

Moved by her tears, how were the feelings of Constantia probed. Assuring Mrs. Rochford that she was in perfect amity with her, and never more disposed to contribute to her happiness than at the very moment when painful duties required her presence elsewhere; she begged her to accept her sincerest thanks for her kind attentions, and to believe, that however distant they might live from each other, she would not have a sincerer, nor more interested

friend, than the orphan whom she had so long cherished.

“ I see,” returned Mrs. Rochford, “ you have some reasons for quitting Portman-square, which you do not chuse to disclose; I will send Georgiana sometimes to you, if I do not come myself. This I have in trust from my mother, to deliver to you, with her kind regards and good wishes. Your attention to her on the death of my brother, she says, she never can forget, because you owed her no kindness; for she was conscious that you must have frequently felt her neglect.”

As she said the last words, Mrs. Rochford put a shagreen case into the hand of Constantia, which she pressed with more fervour than from her apparent listlessness could have been expected. The sensations of Miss Neville at this moment were not to be envied; in parting from Mrs. Rochford, all her good qualities rose in review before

her; an absence of this kind is a temporary death, like the final separation, it draws a thick shade over those blemishes which, when present, were, perhaps, too fastidiously brought forward, and from the same cause, excellence overlooked.

The shagreen case contained a striking likeness of Mrs. Rochford, set in gold, with a plait of Georgiana's hair on the other side, over which was a cypher of G. R. in brilliants; the picture was suspended by a light gold chain, and the whole was executed in the best manner. Lady Darlington had prepared the present, before she knew her young friend was likely to quit Portman-square; her surprise was so great on hearing of her departure, and her regret so strongly expressed, as well as her fears, lest any slight she had received should have induced her to take such a step, that it was at her representation that Mrs. Rochford paid the

visit we have just mentioned; Lady Darlington, at the same time, desired her daughter not to press for an explanation which was not voluntarily afforded, for those who knew the natural openness of Miss Neville's disposition, ought to be aware that any reserve on her part must be indispensable, and dictated by the most imperious necessity.

Lady Darlington fully sensible by this time of the powerful attractions and cultivation of mind, of her, whom she had once deemed *an untaught savage*, had often feared that the comparisons between her attainments and those of her daughter, would be frequently made by the husband of the latter, not much to her advantage. Without conceiving the possibility of the extent of the insult offered to Constantia, she doubted not that some part of Mr. Rochford's behaviour had disgusted her, and prompted a removal in his ab-

sence. Fearing that the suddenness of the proceeding might occasion surmises to the disadvantage of all parties, and fully sensible of the singular attention paid by Miss Neville, both to herself and her daughter in the hour of distress, she thought it necessary for her sake, as well as to acquit herself on the score of gratitude, that this public mark of attention should be paid, with a view that the nurse might understand, and report accordingly, that the intimacy existing was not declined on the part of her mistress; on the contrary, that its discontinuance gave her real uneasiness.

These flattering marks of esteem and regard paid to her by one originally prejudiced against her, were truly consolatory to Miss Neville, who more than ever lamented the cruel dilemma to which she was reduced, while she trusted that a period would arrive when all that was now inexplicable in her

conduct, would be explained to the satisfaction of every one interested in the investigation.

Somers saw, with some degree of concern, the absence of mind and abstracted state into which his fair guest was frequently plunged. The volatile spirits of her brother, and his sanguine expectations of support from persons on whom he had not the smallest claims, he believed to be the chief cause of her depression; for he observed, that after Montagu had been descanting on his great prospects, and the powerful assistance he was to derive from his newly-found friends, her natural cheerfulness and vivacity were completely banished; instead of joining with him in hoping his plans were feasible, and would be well digested before they were put in execution, she would scarcely do more than give a negative or affirmative, and that not till her opinion was pointedly asked.

During her stay in the New Road, the occupation from which she derived most satisfaction, was that of striving to improve the mind of the eldest daughter of Somers. One evening that the father returned earlier from the city than usual, he found Miss Neville thus laudably employed. Since his daughter's return from school, he had been too much absorbed by the management of the concerns of the house of Neville devolving wholly on himself, to find leisure for examining into the state of her improvements, as he would have done had his engagements to the desk been less pressing. He had come home in good spirits to tell Miss Neville that the creditors had agreed to accept of a composition offered to them of fifteen shillings in the pound, to be paid at three different instalments; the period for the last payment of five shillings not to exceed two years. That in consequence of this arrangement, Mr. Mon-

tagu was to be so far exonerated as to be allowed immediately to commence business on his own account, though if the engagements now entered into were not punctually fulfilled, any property he might then be possessed of should be liable to seizure, even to the extent of twenty shillings in the pound, for the whole demand.

And now fair lady, continued Somers, let me see you wear your usual smile. I do not think your brother and yourself have congenial minds, but you will, at your age, be more respectably placed in his house than any where else. The proof I have this night had of your desire to do good to others, and your determination to shake off chagrin and disappointment, by having recourse to useful employments, convinces me that you can always, by your own exertions, secure independence: sweet is the bread of industry, though it may be coarse, and to the

pampered appetite of the epicure most disgusting.

Constantia would have been a very opposite character to that which I have described her to be, had she not felt truly thankful for the intelligence communicated, and happy that her efforts to please were so well received.

“ You,” said she to Somers in reply, “ are too partial to me. I have long wished to ask what could have occasioned the deep distress which you have told me you were formerly involved in, and in an extraordinary manner relieved from. If, with your abilities and application, you could not keep poverty out of doors, how difficult would it be for me to gain a livelihood, who have been brought up to no line of business, and am incapable of sacrificing my opinions to please my superiors?”

“ I find,” replied Somers, “ I must give you a sketch of my story; for the

truth of most part, that good woman on your left hand will vouch. She knows that you have a steadiness and prudence, of which, at your time of life, I was wholly devoid. It was the want of these two qualities that marred my outset in life; but I am confident, possessing them, either a man or a woman of abilities, must make their way good, if not in one line, in another."

After this exordium, Somers related his story, as it is contained in the following Chapter.

CHAP. XIV.

An honest tale speeds best
Being plainly told.

SHAKESPEARE.

MY father kept a grocer's shop on Snow-hill, which was tolerably well frequented by customers. He had by my mother three daughters, and two sons. My eldest brother, George, was a special favourite with the good lady, and by her intended to be bred to a profession, while I was to be condemned to weigh figs and prunes, and, what was still more galling to one who prided himself on his acquaintance with the classics, to wear a white apron, which is the insignia of a grocer; my father, though a liberal-minded man, and equally fond of all his children, was of too indolent a habit to

interfere with the interior management of his family. I recollect, at breakfast, Master George very often pouted, because he thought my piece of bread and butter larger than his, and whenever he declared the cause of his discontent, I instantly relinquished my piece, and took that which he had rejected; similar complaints were frequently made at dinner, which I always endeavoured to obviate by giving him my plate, and asking him for his.

Master George had as great an ascendancy over my sisters, as he had unbounded influence on the mind of my mother. He was now articled to an apothecary, while I kept to my Greek and Latin, with an ardour that at this moment astonishes myself. I was fortunate in getting admission to St. Paul's School, where the teaching of the dead languages is universal; my father was clear that I should learn every thing that I desired to learn, pro-

vided, on a trial, my masters approved of my progress. This they were likely to do, for I was indefatigable, as well when at home as at school. I had no amusements but my book, and I went with much more eagerness to St. Paul's of a morning than I returned from it. In short, it was soon discovered that my talents were too much above mediocrity, and too highly cultivated, to admit of my becoming a vender of tea and sugar. Master George had a profession forced upon him, in order that he might be the gentleman of the family, while your humble servant was buffeted about, because, though three years younger than him, on my examination by a clergyman of great erudition, who visited at our house when he came to London, I was declared to be far his superior in all the requisites for undertaking the study of either physic, law, or divinity. To the last my inclinations pointed, and I was very

earnest for permission to receive instruction in Hebrew. My good friend, the clergyman, offered to take me into his own house for one year, free of all expence but my clothes and books. Before he left town my father promised to consider of his kind proposal; and if he thought he could make any interest in the church, I should be sent down to him in the spring.

Long ere this time, my worthy father paid the debt of nature, and in his grave were buried all my hopes of assuming the clerical functions. After the violence of grief subsided, the little scholar became a butt for the whole house to exercise their wit upon. To live in such a state of warfare was impossible. Going to sea appeared to me to be the only way to banish the remembrance of the grocer's shop and the white apron (with which I was continually threatened). Through the commendation of my master at St.

Paul's, I was allowed to enter his Majesty's navy as a midshipman; and on his representation, and that of one or two friends of the family, my mother fitted me out properly for the sea-service. My stock of books was augmented with a few on navigation; that branch of my education, I was told, could be pursued to advantage on board a man of war, there being a master to instruct the boys who were at all disposed to learn.

I soon discovered that I had no predilection for the life of a sailor, and that to embrace a profession simply to get away from unkindness at home, was a step unworthy of a man whose taste for literature had occasioned him to despise trade, and to be ambitious of becoming one day an ornament to his country. Sedulously bent on improving the opportunities which presented themselves, I soon outstripped my young companions, who preferred

idle amusements to the study of the mathematics, on which subject my preceptor in the art of navigation condescended to afford me instruction. I here, also, cultivated a taste for drawing, and read works on fortifications, which accidentally fell in my way. The last time I went up to the topmast, I felt the employment of a sailor as disagreeable as when my hands were blistered from pulling the ropes, and I feared my head would grow so giddy with gazing on the ocean, that I should lose my hold, and be precipitated into a watery grave. In short, I sickened of the sea, and imagined, in the land service, I should have a better chance for distinguishing myself. Certain of meeting no encouragement from my own relations, I was glad to listen to offers of friendship from others. The school-master had a brother, a lieutenant-colonel in one of the Scotch brigades in the service of Austria; he had offer-

ed to procure an ensign's commission for any young man of talents, disposed to study military tactics and fortification, whom his brother would recommend to his notice. My aversion to the sea, and want of interest to forward me in the English army, though I should, by any extraordinary good luck, get a commission without purchase, induced him to propose to me to embrace this opportunity of changing my profession. Eagerly did I enter into his views ; a desire to see foreign countries prompting me as strongly as any wish to become a soldier. The lieutenant-colonel having been in Scotland to visit his relations, I was, on his return through England, introduced to him previous to my final acceptance of the commission.

The vessel to which I belonged being in Yarmouth Roads, I got myself equipped and ready to embark in the

packet-boat for Hamburgh, without going to London, or apprizing my family of my change of destination. The strict discipline of the military man displayed itself on our journey. If I wished to take a walk and look about me while the horses were changing, or refreshment getting ready, I found I must declare the number of minutes I meant to be absent, and the least delay on my part, though I arrived at the post-house long before my presence was necessary, was sure to extort a severe reprimand. In other circumstances I should not have blamed this rigid adherence to punctuality; but when I recollected that I might never traverse the same road again, and that I wished to judge from personal observation if the reports of travellers were founded in truth, I could not help thinking there was a degree of selfishness in seeking to deprive me of the opportunity, because there was no object but

what was too familiar to his view to excite curiosity.

At last we accomplished our journey, and I was introduced to my brother officers as a young man who was likely to be a credit to their corps. I soon convinced my patron that I was fully sensible of his kindness, and possessed the requisites which he desired in a junior officer.

Before I got any other promotion than a lieutenancy, I lost him by death, and this after I had become as seriously attached to him as if he had been my father. This part of my life I must pass over very briefly; suffice it to say, that after the death of my patron, I contracted intimacies with persons who soon led me into expences far beyond my means. Unused to the harassing of claimants for petty debts, I became almost frantic from my inability to satisfy their demands. A young man of fashion, taking the tour of Europe, with

whom I had often associated, perceived the depression under which I laboured ; he made himself acquainted with the cause of my embarrassments, and generously offered to advance the sum requisite to make me easy. Ignorant of the ways of the world, I yet had too much pride to submit to receive obligations that I knew I had not the power of repaying. This communication was, in the end, productive of a change which neither of us expected. Mr. Lambert, with a friendly zeal, made such an investigation into my concerns, as convinced him I had no chance of extricating myself without accepting pecuniary aid from him, or some other person. He saw, also, that I had little chance of rising in the army, and from the smallness of the pay, how difficult it was for any man to avoid sometimes getting into debt. If I would throw up my commission and attach myself to him, he promised that

I should become his travelling companion during the two years he meant to remain abroad; and that on his return to England, his interest should be exerted to procure me some situation under government, or to forward my views in any way most consonant to my own wishes: that of private tutor to a nobleman's sons, he conceived, would be advantageous, and with the opportunities I should enjoy of acquiring the Italian language, and other accomplishments, while a resident with him at Rome, he thought it impossible for me to fail of success in whatever I might undertake.

Heartily tired of living in garrisons, and by no means more captivated with the land-service of Austria, than I had been with the usual occupations on board a man of war, I took little time for deliberation, nor after the recent vexations I had endured from the extravagance I had been guilty of, did I

feel any regret at quitting my regiment.

The interval I passed in the society of the amiable and accomplished Lambert, may be termed the halcyon days of my life, (begging your pardon, Mrs. Somers, said he, bowing to his wife); his was a character seldom to be met with, for never was he known to make a promise without performing it, or willingly to give a moment's uneasiness to a fellow creature; on the contrary, it was his delight to alleviate the distresses of others. The income allowed him to spend abroad, was fully adequate to the expences of both of us. When arrived at the age of twenty-four, he expected to be in possession of a considerable estate left him by an uncle (for he was a younger brother) and he frequently said his first step would be to render me independent. Alas! but a very few weeks previous to his birthday, he was attacked by the malignant

fever which, at certain seasons, is most fatal to strangers resident in Rome or its vicinity. I had remonstrated with him on the propriety of removing to a purer atmosphere, till the baleful effects of the pestilential winds should have passed over; he laughed at my precautions, for he was at the time engaged in studying antiquities, and could not have brooked any delay in his favourite pursuits; particularly as he had promised his friends to return to England in the course of that year, he was fearful of not completing his collections in that time. The disease was rapid in its progress, and but too soon convinced all around that the stroke was mortal. I never quitted his bedside, and as long as he retained a ray of reason he expressed his gratitude, while he requested that I would go to England to see his friends and relations, who, from the account they had received from him of my worth and su-

perior abilities, would, he was well assured, be ready to further my views in any line of life I chose to adopt. His watch and seals he desired me to deliver to his sister Isabella, as a token of affectionate remembrance; to myself he gave his wardrobe, and all the cash which might remain, after defraying funeral charges; this would not have sufficed to bear me to London, if I had not received his permission to dispose of his medals, excepting a few rare ones, which he wished to be presented to his brother Sir William.

You will believe with what a heavy heart I received these commissions; as a sailor and a soldier, I had been so inured to hardships and the inclemencies of weather, that I who had none to lament me, escaped, while my beloved Lambert, the pride of his relatives, who were sensible of the excellent qualities, both of his head and heart, with his honours in full blossom,

fell a victim. I wrote to Sir William Lambert an account of his illness and death, stating that I had some valuables consigned to my care, which I should deliver immediately on my arrival. At Paris it was my turn to experience a severe illness; many weeks was I under medical care, and but for an uncommon strength of constitution, must have fallen a sacrifice to complaints which seemed to have taken deep root. Surrounded by strangers in a foreign land, none of whom would render assistance without being well paid for it, my purse was nearly drained of its contents, and but for my recollecting the name of the agent of my old friend and tutor, on board the *Inflexible*, who I had empowered to receive some prize-money, which I had never drawn for, (keeping it as a resource in case of returning to my own country,) I should not have been able to reach London; a bill on him was received in payment

by the person with whom I lodged : after shewing it to an English officer, who, on hearing the state of my health, and desire to get to my native country, offered to take the risk of its being paid on himself, giving cash for the amount. This circumstance I was not apprized of till the eve of my departure, when my unknown friend was on a jaunt to Versailles, and consequently I had not the power of tendering my personal acknowledgments for his benevolence.

Worn out with the fatigue of my journey and with sea-sickness, which I had never felt before, I was obliged to remain a day at Dover to recruit my strength. On my arrival in London, I determined to stay at the inn where the diligence put up till the next morning, and to leave my baggage there, while I reconnoitered the grocer's shop on Snow-hill. My meagre countenance and eyes sunk into their sockets, I was

well convinced would not be thought to belong to Andrew Somers, the round-faced youth, who had put on the midshipman's uniform some nine years before. I therefore walked into the shop, asking to speak to Mrs. Somers, without declaring the nature of my errand. My mother came forward, so fat and so sleek, that I saw she must have "fared sumptuously every day," and I doubted not, that if I had been weighing figs and prunes, instead of scampering over distant countries, I might by this time, from my size, have been fitted for becoming a candidate for an alderman's gown. Prefacing that I came with intelligence of her son, I requested to speak to her in the parlour.

Here sat my youngest sister, much more fashionably attired than I should have expected to find an inhabitant of the parish of St. Sepulchre, whose taper fingers were sometimes employed in making up ounces of tea, and penny-

worths of barley-sugar to the *canaille*. I was introduced by my mother, as a gentleman who had lately come from sea, and she supposed could tell all about brother George, and when they might look for him in London.

“Have you not another son?” said I, looking very sternly in her face. “Not that I know of,” she replied; “for we have had no account of him since he ran away from his ship in Yarmouth Roads; and we are sure if he had been living, we should have heard from him, if it had only been to get money to supply his extravagance.”

“There you are mistaken, mother,” I exclaimed; “for though I am come to you a little the worse for the wear, with a purse almost empty, I have no debts, and I believe my character for integrity is unimpeached, notwithstanding the lying reports of those who said I had absconded from my ship; let them come forward, whoever they

may be, I challenge them to prove their assertions."

My mother looked a little abashed, while my sister cried out " Surely this cannot be brother Andrew !"

" It is, indeed, Miss Mary," said I, " pray what is become of Elizabeth and Dorothy ?"

" They are both married, one to the mate of the ship that my brother George goes to sea in, and the other to a person who keeps a slop-shop in Wapping."

" And you, when are you to be married ?"

" I don't know," bridling, " nor can I think you have any right to ask the question."

" Say you so, my good girl; well then take a piece of advice from brother Andrew, who has seen a little more of the world than any of his family; when you are dressed more suitably to serving behind the counter, perhaps you

may get a decent tradesman for a husband among your own neighbours, without going to Wapping or Rotherhithe to seek for one. Good-bye to you both, when I next call this way you shall see me better clad, I am in my travelling dress now."

My mother would have intreated me to stay, but I could not brook her telling to a stranger how little she cared for one who had never forfeited his claims to her affection, though she had most unnaturally treated him from infancy as an alien.

Sauntering along Newgate-street, I recollected a little shop, where I used to buy my exercise books and pens, on my way to and from St. Paul's School; it was in the passage of which the Chapter-house is the corner. Here I went to see if the good woman who kept it would recognize me. She was in the little closet behind the shop, which served for parlour, kitchen, and hall;

her grand-daughter, coarsely drest, but cleanly in her apparel and person, was working at her needle at the window. The old lady asked my business. " I have none, madam," said I, " but to enquire after your health." " I know the voice," said she, " but I cannot call to mind who you are." I related to her some circumstances which brought me to her recollection. " I said so, Sally," cries the old dame to the young one, " Andrew Somers did not run away from his ship; if he had, he would not be so ready to come among his old acquaintance." She then asked me, with great kindness, to walk in, and tell her what I had been about all this time, and how it was that I had left the navy, and looked so thin? The young person went on with her work, though I could perceive she listened to my tale, and sometimes cast a glance on the hero of it.

In return for my adventures, I got many an anecdote of my old school-fellows, and learned that my brother George was surgeon to one of the packets in the service of the Post-office; and that when he did come to London, which was not often, he drove my sisters out in a whiskey; and, in short, was quite the fine gentleman, taking them to the play, and introducing them to his male acquaintances, by which means the two eldest were married, though it was not believed either of their husbands were rich. The wife of the mate of the packet had, on her marriage, gone down to settle at Falmouth, to be ready to receive both surgeon and mate on their return from their voyages.

Believing myself among old friends, I asked if they could accommodate me with an apartment in their house, as I knew they formerly let lodgings.

Where neither party feels disposed to cavil for trifles, a bargain is easily concluded. I went back to the inn, discharged my bill, removed my baggage, took my dinner in the small-room before-mentioned, and found myself as much at home as if I had never been absent. My ancient friend saw no attractions in my lanthorn-jaws and dim eyes, or, I confess, she was rather premature in taking a wanderer, like myself, into the same house where resided her grand-daughter in the bloom of nineteen.

The next morning I rose betimes, dressing myself to the best advantage, in order to pay my respects to Sir William Lambert, who I hoped to find at his town-residence. Here, however, I was disappointed. I left my credentials, and a few lines from myself, with an old woman, who said she had the care of the house till the family came to town, which, she believed, would be

in less than a fortnight; but in the meantime the letters should be forwarded. When I called again, she told me that by a letter from Sir William's steward, she was desired to ask for my address, and that when his master arrived, I should have due notice, so that I need not trouble myself to make farther enquiries. I gave my direction, and went home to meditate on the ways of Providence, in thus recalling to himself one of the most philanthropic and benevolent of his creatures, and leaving in the full possession of wealth and honours, a man who could neither find leisure or inclination to write a line in reply to one of his fellow-men, of whom he must have heard the best report, and knew that he could not pay a stronger tribute of respect to the memory of his brother, than by seeking to render service to him, whom, when living, he so highly regarded.

I should not have formed a conclu-

sion so unfavourable to Sir William, if I had not known the strong language used by his brother after he was convinced that his last hour was approaching. He expressly there said, " that I had left a profession to attach myself to him, and that one of the most poignant of his regrets in quitting life at that period, was his utter inability to reward me according to my deserts. That he was aware I had very few resources in England, but what must arise from an application of my talents, and he hoped on my presenting that letter, his brother would give me a draught for a hundred pounds, merely to defray the expences of my journey ; which sum, he trusted, would only be an earnest of his future liberality and patronage." No mention was made of the medals or watch, these articles I specified in my own letter, communicating his death, to be in my possession ; but had I been disposed to be a villain,

not an enquiry could have been made respecting them. In the letter inclosing my beloved friend's last request, I accounted for my delay, by stating the severe and tedious illness which confined me at Paris; this should have explained to him that an immediate compliance with it, would essentially serve the person in whose favour it was made.

Going frequently to the Chapter Coffee-house to read the news-papers and periodical publications, it struck me that I might employ myself in translating for the booksellers, till something better should cast up; the attractions of the fair grand-daughter of my landlady inclining me to remain in the neighbourhood of the Row, I determined to make application to one resident there, who I was told by her was supposed to be the most liberal in his payments of any in the trade. To this patron of literature I very briefly stated

my knowledge of languages, and my desire to devote some hours every day to translating works, such as were approved on the Continent but not known to the English reader, many of which, from my own observation of their celebrity and excellence, I could recommend to his notice. Here I found I was all in the wrong, Mr. ——— chose to be the umpire himself, and to undertake no publication recommended by any person's judgment, *save and except his own*. He then asked me how much I could translate in a day. I told him what number of pages I could complete and finish correctly for the press, one day with another, in the course of a week ; but I concluded, the elegance of style and spirit by which my performances, I flattered myself, would be characterized, would ascertain their value much more than the quantity of lines I might write. " All

young writers think the same," said this sapient retailer of the produce of the brains of others, "if your specimens of composition are approved of, I shall not object to give you at the rate of fifteen shillings a week, provided you do not slacken your pace, as some in my employ have done, though very diligent at first."

"I do not wonder at it, master; but as I shall not begin, you will experience no disappointment from me, so good-day to you."

"Fifteen shillings a week! why a ticket-porter, if he has any luck, will earn as much, when the town is full, in two days." The last words I muttered as I walked across the shop, while I almost repented I had not caned its master.

The idea of the grocer's shop and the white apron darted into my mind. I began to think it a pity my taste had

been too refined for becoming its master. This, however, you will believe, was only a momentary feeling. The sight of a penny-post letter in an unknown hand, surprised me. I found it was from Sir William Lambert's house-steward, informing me that his master was arrived in St. James's-square, and desired I would call there upon him the next morning by ten o'clock. Expecting but little good to result from the interview, I, however, determined to obey the summons, and, at the same time, to deliver up what had been committed to my charge.

On my arrival at the door of Sir William, I found it open, and his carriage in waiting. The porter ushered me into a small room off the hall, while he left me to seek for the house steward, Mr. Mallet, whose visitor I was considered when I gave in my name. This gentleman soon made his appearance,

apologizing for Sir William's not being able to see me, from his being obliged to go out on indispensable business, accompanied by his lawyer, who was now with him looking over papers and parchments.

“ I presume, Sir,” said I, with some degree of contempt in my manner, “ it was a concerted plan that I should not be admitted to see the brother of my deceased friend. Just as he pleases, only I do not deliver the watch for Miss Lambert, and the medals for Sir William, into the hands of any person but one of the parties already named.”

“ I have Sir William's authority to give you any acknowledgment for your care of them you please to name.”

“ That is nothing to the purpose, Mr. Mallet. What I have undertaken to do I shall perform ; and when I next

receive a letter from you, perhaps I shall not have leisure to come to St. James's-square."

Rising to go away, I was intreated to stay till Sir William was apprized of my being in his house ; perhaps when he heard my name he might be induced to give me an audience. The sound of voices on the staircase roused me from a train of thought. Mr. Mallet's smooth speech and obsequious countenance, convinced me his superior was within hearing. I was ushered across the hall to a large dining room where stood two gentlemen, one of whom I knew, by a faint resemblance to his brother, to be Sir William.

" I am sorry, Mr. Somers," said the baronet, in a hurried tone, " that I am so unfortunate as to be engaged this morning. Let me know how I can serve you. My interest is not great ; but if you tell me what your views are, you may depend on my exerting it for

the sake of my brother, who recommended you to my notice."

" You are very obliging, Sir ; and as I have a full sense of the value of your time, I shall not intrude any longer upon it than to deliver these bequests, the one for yourself, and the other for Miss Isabella, your sister."

" All very right, I perceive, Mr. Somers ; pray accept of this trifle for the trouble you have had."

In saying these words he attempted to put ten guineas into my hand, which I refused to take, alledging, that I required no other reward than what arose from fulfilling my duty. Sir William seemed to feel a little awkward, when his companion reminded him that the hour fixed for departure was passed.

" That is true ; Mr. Somers will have the goodness to call some other morning. Be sure to acquaint me when this gentleman comes to my

door," said he to the porter at going into his carriage, while I walked off, determined never again to knock at his door, though I should be starving.

CHAP. XV.

Bring Faith, endued with eagle-eyes,
 That joins this earth to distant skies;
 Bland Hope, that makes each sorrow less,
 Still smiling calm amidst distress;
 And bring the meek-ey'd Charity,
 Not least, tho' youngest of the three.

HAMILTON.

MR. Somers thus proceeded in his narrative:—By this time I had fallen deeply in love; nor did the fair Sarah regard me very scornfully. My principal object, in applying to one of the guardians of literature for employment, was, that I might occasionally enjoy her society of an evening, and observe whether she had other admirers. To marry, in my present circumstances, was impossible, and to fetter her with engagements, as distant from my thoughts, as was any intention of

seeking to gain her affections without making her my wife. In one of the papers I saw an advertisement for an usher at an academy a few miles from town, on a superior plan; where a thorough knowledge of the French, German, and Italian languages was particularly required in the assistant then wanted. The thought struck me that country air might recruit my strength; and I was certain I could give satisfaction as a teacher. I waited upon the principal at the hour specified for his being in Town. He was so much pleased with my abilities, and satisfied with the unvarnished tale which I related of my proceedings, that he chose to make no enquiries about me of any person but my landlady, whom he knew to have lived many years on the same spot, and that she bore a most respectable character. The idea of parting from Sarah gave me some pangs; nor did I fail to re-

mark the changes in her countenance, when I communicated my intentions to her grandmother, who approved most highly of what I had done.

In all this time I heard not a word of either mother or sister; nor did I chance to meet them in my walks. Snow-hill I carefully avoided, lest they should see me, and imagine I was come to take any thing from them.

The very day preceding that on which I meant to enter on the duties of my office, I received a visit from a gentleman, who introduced himself as the husband of Miss Isabella Lambert. He came to thank me, in her name, for my care of the watch entrusted to me, and in his own, to request my acceptance of a fifty pound note, as a tribute of gratitude for my attention to their brother. His manner prepossessed me in his favour; nor did his enquiries respecting my future destination appear to proceed from curiosity, but a lauda-

ble desire to promote my success in whatever I should undertake. I found his residence was in the country, and that it was only for a few weeks himself and his lady were to remain in town. I took the note with thankfulness, promising, that if on any future change in my plans of life I thought it probable that their countenance would be of service to my interest, I should avail myself of the permission he gave to seek to obtain it.

In relating my ill success at Sir William's to my ancient dame, I had ventured to affirm, that the behaviour of the lady, had I been admitted to her presence, would have been different to that of her brother. I was not sorry that I had so early an opportunity of proving my assertion, and that some of my friend's family partook of his good qualities.

Settled in the house of my liberal employer, I soon became familiarized

to my business, nor was my diligent attention to it unregarded. The good doctor loved his bottle and his joke, and was not a little gratified that his pupils were well attended, while he could enjoy both. The only thing which hurt my feelings, during my residence under his roof, was the behaviour of his wife to me at table; it sometimes was so glaringly neglectful, that when any of the children's parents were present, I have taken pains to mortify her by letting it be conspicuous to them, who in return made her feel her own insignificance. Many of those persons who had children under my particular care, invited me to dine with them at their own houses, and expressed the strongest desire to serve me, should I quit ——— House. Their requesting me to examine one or two of their daughters, who had left school, as to their progress in French, arithmetic, &c. gave birth to a design which I

afterwards put in execution—that of becoming a private teacher, by attending families for so many hours in the day, to give instruction in various branches.

I had been a year and a half at ——— House, when this thought struck me, and I pursued it with avidity, as opening to me the earliest prospect of accomplishing my union with Sarah, of whose virtues and amiable disposition I became daily more sensible, nor was I less persuaded that her affection for me was purely disinterested. My pupils lay so much at the west end of the town, that I found it utterly impossible to return to my old lodgings. I had besides a prospect of an evening school for boys, and to accommodate whom it was necessary to have a tolerable sized room, situated in the centre of those who promised to support me in my plan. Near Oxford-street I found a suitable apartment,

tolerably low-rented. My success exceeded my expectations; I had scarce an interval to visit my old friends in, but Sunday; for by the evening I was so tired, that I was little capable of walking to the city, or if I did reach it, of enjoying the pleasures of their society. The old lady I observed to labour under great uneasiness; she at last told me she had met with so many losses in her business, that she believed she had better shut up shop, and go to the west end of the town, and live with me; for her grand-daughter could take in needlework as well there as elsewhere. She was apprized of our attachment, and had long given it her sanction.

While I was making the necessary arrangements, giving the landlord notice, &c. death arrested our worthy parent, at the advanced age of 73. This brought on an early *eclaircissement* with debtor and creditors; the

house was taken off our hands, and some of the furniture too ancient to be removed, what remained was my wife's little fortune; for such you have already judged Sarah to be. I waited not for the expiration of mourning to give her a legal title to my protection, as I considered in doing so I was paying the highest tribute of respect to the memory of one so deservedly esteemed by us both. I soon found the attendance on my evening school irksome, and having plenty of employment in the line of private teaching, I relinquished it, removing to a smaller but more comfortable apartment in Tottenham-court Road, where shortly after my wife presented to me the girl whom you were this night condescending to instruct.

As my income exceeded our expenditure, we lived perfectly satisfied with our moderate share of the luxuries of life. The care of the child and atten-

tion to my comforts, fully occupied my wife, we sought not for society, she had been so secluded from it, by the attendance on her grandmother, and the necessity of contributing to her own support by her industry, that she had very few acquaintances, and those were at too great a distance from the part of the town where we lived, to admit of receiving their visits or paying any in return.

My mother and sister I was credibly informed, affected to consider me as lost to them and the world, from my living so openly with an object of illicit attachment; for they could not suppose me so foolish as to have married Sarah, or if I had been guilty of such imprudence, I would certainly have introduced her as my wife to some of my connections. While I was satisfied of the rectitude of my own conduct, and enjoyed domestic peace, I cared little for such insinuations; but

for the unnatural behaviour of those of my own family, I should, perhaps, never have had an opportunity of proving the worth and goodness of the kind partner of my affections, into whose faithful bosom I could pour my inmost thoughts, and disclose every source of both grief and joy. Neither of us had a wish concealed from the other, though sometimes my wife would ask me, if when abroad pursuing my business, I never wished myself a single man, as she doubted not if I had chosen to exert the arts of pleasing, I might have been acceptable to many far her superiors. My answer you will believe accorded with her wishes, for I would have been the most ungrateful of men, if mine could have strayed from her.

She was pregnant with my eldest boy Frederick, when I was attacked by a nervous fever, which obliged me to give up attending on my pupils. I wrote letters to the parties, stating that

indisposition confined me to my room for the present, but as soon as my health was restored, I should resume my former occupations; for to none of the families whose children I taught, had I explained my situation as a married man. The young people who attended my evening school were the children of an inferior class, when that was given up, and my residence changed, they lost sight of me, as I did of them. I had saved a little money, but the expences attendant on sickness soon decreased this store. I was ordered by the apothecary who attended me to go into the country, the violence of the disorder being then abated, though the lowness of spirits, and feebleness of the frame required to be invigorated by change of air. I asked for his bill, that it might be discharged previous to my following his advice. The amount of it was far beyond what I had expected; in order to settle it, we were

obliged to part with many of our articles of furniture, and, unable to raise money by any other means, our subsistence depended wholly on the sale of necessaries. My mind lost all its tone, my mental powers were as much enfeebled by disease as those of the body. My wife's patience and fortitude, while it endeared her to me, added to the poignancy of my afflictions. Many days of dreary want and cheerless poverty did we endure; our little Mary at last began to droop, her disorder was to be imputed to the scanty supplies of nourishment she had received, and the want of air and exercise; her mother, it may be believed, was unwilling to take her to shops where our goods were disposed of, and her walks being to none other but to those, or to places where she bought our provision, Mary seldom crossed the threshold; though previous to my illness she had been daily in the

habit of accompanying her mother wherever she went.

I should tell you, that before we came to this extremity, my mother had by circuitous means informed me, that if I would agree to separate from my wife (whom she affected to stile my mistress) she would get her into the Lying-in Hospital, and she doubted not, that after her recovery a wet-nurse's place could be easily obtained for her; on my compliance with this proposal, she would immediately allow me a guinea a week, which should not be withdrawn till my health was completely re-established, and I found my own finances fully equal to mine and the children's maintenance. I communicated this offer to her who, next to myself, was most interested in its rejection or acceptance; with trembling apprehension did she ask my opinion on the subject; I told her I could have but one; "whatever that is," she re-

plied, " I will abide by it, though I should suffer what I dread more than death. " Sarah," said I, looking steadfastly at her, " did you imagine I could ever forsake you? The person that seeks to dis sever us, I must consider my bitterest enemy; we will brave the ills of life together, but never seek happiness apart." Weak and feeble, and uncertain how I was to be freed from embarrassments that were daily increasing, I felt at this moment that my happiness depended not on outward circumstances. Sarah shed tears of pure delight, while I pressed to my bosom a wife such as few men are blest with.

The hour of extreme distress at last approached, for three days my wife had not been out of doors; all that remained in our apartment was a matrass, one blanket, a wooden table, a chair, and a little crockery; the small store of provision she had then been able to purchase, was expended in twenty-four

hours ; we were literally all of us about to perish for want of food ; my wife and child lay on the matrass, I was sitting on the chair with my hat flapped over my eyes, ruminating on our melancholy fate, and almost doubting the infinite goodness of the Almighty, who appeared to my partial conceptions at that moment, to be wantonly inflicting punishments on his innocent creatures. Lost in the profoundness of my own reflections, I heard not the opening of the door, nor the sound of footsteps ; a hand on the table before me, which when withdrawn discovered two guineas, made me look upwards, and I saw the figure of a man in black gliding softly out of the room. I took up the money, felt that it was no deception, roused my wife, and fell on my knees before her, to thank her for the preservation of our lives, as but for her virtue we must have perished. My own sinfulness in doubting the good-

ness of God, smote me to the heart, I wept profusely, they were tears of contrition that I shed : from that moment I became another creature.

My wife, renovated as well as myself by assistance administered in so extraordinary a manner, soon procured us some sustenance ; luckily, the season was mild, therefore we had not cold to endure along with hunger. We pondered on the incident of the morning till we were lost in conjecture. The child recovered fast, her illness appearing to have proceeded from viewing the dejection of her parents, added to close confinement. As I was now well enough to be left some hours alone, Mrs. Somers took her out to walk in the fields, from which change in their mode of living both parties benefited considerably. Before the expiration of a week our unknown friend paid a second visit, I was alone when he came in, and sitting opposite the

door, I had an opportunity of viewing his countenance ; it was placid and benevolent, without bearing any of those extraordinary marks of originality, which I conceived would beam forth from the features of a man capable of acting so opposite to the common received maxims of those that live in the world, who think if they relieve distress when brought forward to their view, they are practising in their fullest extent the precepts of their Divine law-giver. Lost in contemplating his countenance, I spoke not a word, nor till some seconds after the door closed, did I rise to see what sum he had left behind ; I found, on examination, it was three guineas.

When my wife came in, she said she had met a gentleman that used to frequent her grandmother's shop, who asked where she lived, and who was her husband ; on these questions being answered, he said he was seeking for

a person to translate some papers of consequence, from French into English, and perhaps Mr. Somers might know of some person whom he could recommend, or if he had leisure, would undertake the business himself, for which, if well executed, there would be most liberal pay. My wife considering this rencontre a most fortunate one, had given our address, and expected Mr. Jones would call the next morning. When I shewed her the money, she asked my permission to lay out some of it in redeeming our goods, that the apartment might have a decent appearance when Mr. Jones came to visit us. You will believe I acquiesced in her ideas, and was not a little gratified at feeling that the work of translation did not terrify me. Ten days before a proposal of the kind would have sent me to bed lamenting my inability. Mr. Jones kept his appointment; I found in the course of conversation,

that he was employed by a nobleman to get the papers rendered into English by one thoroughly conversant with the idiom of both languages, and from a rough sketch I made at the moment, I calculated that I was offered at the rate of five guineas for the same quantity that my friend the bookseller offered me fifteen shillings. I got through the number of sheets given to me for a trial, long before Mr. Jones came again, he took them with him, and before the next day was closed, sent the whole manuscript, expressing the highest approbation of the manner in which the first part was executed; adding, that he doubted not, that besides the sum promised, his employer would be so well pleased, as to give a compliment to Mrs. Somers for a new gown.

While busied at my pen, our old friend in the clerical habit walked into the room, and as usual laid his contri-

bution to our comfort on the table. I rose from my work, and requested he would be seated. This he declined, motioning at the same time to go away, I got between him and the door, and in a resolute but respectful tone, assured him we should not part without being better acquainted, for I was now able to live from the produce of my own labour, and I should hold myself unworthy of the friendly aid he had administered to my necessities, if I suffered such benevolence to waste itself in supporting persons already above want, when there were, doubtless, so many deserving objects to whom such charity would be truly acceptable. He then assured me, he was merely the agent of another. "Whoever he may be," I replied, "I must insist on knowing to whom I am indebted for more than the preservation of life, and by what means my distress was made known?"

“ My principal is a man whose name will be familiar to you, when I pronounce it, the venerable and good Mr. ——— of Clapham. I am one of many whom he employs to seek out distress in the secret recesses of this great city. In this neighbourhood I sometimes make inquiry after deserving persons, who may be reduced to penury or afflicted by disease. From the general good character for industry and sobriety of yourself and wife, your late severe illness, and consequent embarrassments, awakened the sympathy of your neighbours. They saw with regret the dejected countenance of your wife, and from her failing to appear as usual, they suspected her absence to proceed from the real cause. I came, and was convinced that their conjectures were well-founded. Since we have conversed so far on this subject, and you decline further relief, I must acquaint you, that I represented to Mr. Thompson

the present state of your wife, who has commissioned me to ask her whether she would prefer being delivered at home by an accoucher, who will attend her at his expence, or go to an hospital not far from hence, where she will have every attention paid both to herself and child, that skill and humanity can dictate." You will readily believe, my dear Miss Neville, that this candid account of what seemed an inexplicable act of kindness, awakened a variety of emotions. Notwithstanding the great and exalted virtues of this pious sincere Christian, many have chosen to impute to a love of praise, and an ostentatious display of philanthropy and charity, actions of the purest and disinterested benevolence. I blush for human nature, when I recollect that base sordid minds are so often employed in vilifying characters whose excellence they envy, while they strive not to attain to any degree of competition by

acting in like manner, but rather by falsehood, seek to bring them down to their own level.

To be as brief as possible, all our undertakings prospered. I soon discovered that my bodily strength kept no pace with the powers of my mind. When my wife returned home to me with our fine boy Frederick, in viewing my little Mary sportively playing with him, I grieved to think that a family picture so truly gratifying, could not long greet my sight. To attend my pupils, as formerly, at their own habitations, was quite inconsistent with the debility of my frame. The sum I had received from Mr. Jones, I determined should be my wife's, to support her and the children during my absence, or till I could send her farther supplies. Country air was absolutely necessary to restore me, but I could only get it in one way, by taking an assistant's place in a school in the coun-

try, and painful to my feelings as was this tearing me from what I valued most on earth, I was obliged to yield to a necessity that governs more absolutely than the most despotic monarch of the East.

After some months residence in Gloucestershire, I found myself so much recruited and so comfortably situated, that I wrote for my wife to come down as soon as she could let the apartment she inhabited to persons whose punctuality in payment she could depend upon. This she did in a few weeks, and to my infinite satisfaction I was again blest with her society. My employer was so desirous of retaining me in his service, that he did every thing in his power to accommodate myself and family. If my profits at the end of the year were but trifling, I was enabled to support my family decently, and this though I had three children, my youngest son being

born in Gloucestershire. To give me every chance for making the most of my abilities, I was allowed, during the half-holidays, to attend families where there were young ladies, to whom my instructions, in several branches, were acceptable.

I know not how long I might have remained in this peaceful retreat, if I had not received a letter from my sister resident at Wapping, full of the kindest expressions of regard, requesting, in the name of the whole family, that I would come up to town, as they wished much to see me. I read this delectable epistle to my wife, after which I tost it into the fire, determining to pay not the least attention to the writer, or any of the groupe. In little more than eight days another arrived, urging my attendance, as brother George was dead, and there was money willed to me, which must be paid into my own hands. Stating the case to my principal, he

cheerfully consented to my absenting myself from the school for the time necessary for transacting the business. I arrived at the old spot on Snow-hill, about seven in the evening, where were assembled to receive me the three sisters and two husbands. The seaman now took his departure from the port of London; his wife had, therefore, settled near her sister in Wapping. The youngest was married to a man who, after trying various means of getting a living, was now a waiter at one of the gaming-houses in the vicinity of St. James's. I cannot tell you the struggles of my mind to behave with any degree of composure, when I recollected their former hard-heartedness.

The women squeezed out a few hypocritical tears, and said how much the country had improved brother Andrew. They offered me a variety of refreshments, all which I declined,

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saying I came to receive money, and not to waste time in nonsense. I was then told my share of the sum in their hands was thirty guineas. " Let me see the dear sparklers!" said I with vehemence. " Since I was last in this parlour, I have learned that gold is the only friend that can be depended upon." They stared with astonishment, while my mother emptied a bag on the table, and desired me to divide it into four equal parts; during this employment, I displayed the avidity of the miser, soliloquizing on the valuable properties of the produce of the mines of Peru. I desired my sisters to take their portions; when they had done so, and I was counting my own a second time, as if afraid of not doing justice to myself, I exclaimed, " Dear pictures of king George, I wonder not that your train of admirers are so numerous, henceforth I see no beauties in either the animate or inanimate works of cre-

ation that can compare with thy sterling attractions !”

The men and women looked first at each other, and then at me, who was enjoying their surprize as much as I despised their want of penetration in not discerning that I was acting a part. Finding I had travelled the preceding night, they no longer insisted on my staying to partake of a supper, which they had intended to be a reconciliation one.

Each party pressing me to take a bed, I determined on going with the person who looked most discontented ; this happening to be my youngest sister, I trudged off to Little Pulteney-street with her, all agreeing to breakfast with my mother the next morning. On our way home, I learned, that without my personal attendance, none of the groupe would have received a shilling ; my mother had withheld the account of monies in her hands, alledg-

ing, in excuse, that she expected to receive more, when she would pay to each person their share of the property. By the advice of a lawyer I was summoned to town, and she was made to believe that I came to upbraid her with her former ill-treatment of me, and to demand a rigid scrutiny into all her proceedings. It was suggested, that if this threat should be executed, it was not unlikely that we might share as much more. My brother George had shewn himself, during his last voyage, more attached to me than I could have believed; though I was always convinced, that had he been in England during my misfortunes, he would have sought to mitigate them. It seems he inquired very particularly respecting my place of residence, and declared when he came home next time, he would buy a whiskey and horse, and ride down to my place of residence, on purpose to see if I liked

Greek and Latin as well as ever, and what sort of a father I made. While influenced by this idea he made his will, in which I was included, and mentioned in terms of affection and kindness. But for the dissipated turn of my brother, which injured his own constitution, and did not tend to improve the morals of his sisters, his fortune would have been far more considerable.

The next morning at breakfast I laid aside my feigned character. I wished to let the whole party see that brother Andrew was "a chip of the old block;" for my father would have been a rich man, had he possessed the worldly wisdom so necessary for getting on as a London tradesman. When the meal was concluded, I laid my purse, with the thirty guineas, on the table; addressing my mother, I requested her acceptance of it. She stared with astonishment, while she acknowledged it

was but a small portion of what I should have received from her as an atonement for former neglect. I put the same question to my sisters, who, with no good grace, in their turn, declared, that their own share was more than they merited. " Since then you do not grudge what I have received," said I hastily, " I will depart from you in peace, wishing you all as happy as I am, in spite of your efforts to make me otherwise. Good-bye to ye ; remember, brother Andrew bears no malice in his heart, though he abjures all connection with those who only sent for him to serve their own ends."

Going out of the door of the shop I met a man, who asked me if my name was Somers ; on my replying in the affirmative, he said he was the lawer employed by the family in settling the affairs of my brother, and he wished to have some conversation respecting them with me. " Well, well," said I, " come

along, we can talk in the street, or at the inn, for I have taken leave here." When we reached Holborn, he asked me if I had any objection to accompany him to his chambers in Furnival's-inn. I told him certainly I could have none ; though I hoped what he had to communicate would not oblige me to remain many days in town. That, he said, would depend on the importance which I might attach to it. When arrived at his chambers, he told me that a gentleman lately from the West Indies, had been inquiring after the brother of Mr. George Somers, who died the year before at Barbadoes, as he had brought to England some money paid to him on his account, which he wished to deliver to his representative ; and he considered the brother, whom he understood was married and had children, as the proper one. Eager to see a person, who though a stranger, was disposed to think me worth inquiring

after, I requested the attorney to give me his address: a compliance would have taken from his consequence; he, therefore, after much speaking to no purpose, agreed to accompany me to Bloomsbury-square, where I was immediately introduced to your father. The respect which he inspired, made this limb of the law keep his proper distance; and when he told him his presence was not requisite, he very obsequiously retired; saying, he concluded I would look in at his chambers after I had conversed with Mr. Neville.

This interview was productive of many changes. The reception your father gave me, made me wish to attach my fortune to his. His openness, his liberality of sentiment, his classical knowledge, all tended to excite attachment. My brother had amused him with a sketch of my youthful adventures; and, when in good health,

had ventured in some speculations in my name ; the profits of which were to be remitted to me, although he had been living, to try, as he said, whether it was bad luck, or bad management, that kept me so poor, that my sisters were ashamed of owning me to be brother Andrew. This mark of regard so little expected, awakened new regrets, that I had enjoyed no opportunity of associating with my brother since we grew up to manhood. The hundred pounds your father was disposed to pay me, I requested he would hold in trust till I determined on what use to make of it.

Inquiring with more than common interest into my future views, he found I had no chance of succeeding to the school in which I was employed : my own observations having led me to conclude that my master's daughter would be the prize of the successor to her father ; nor had I failed to notice the surprise and regret which the latter

could with difficulty repress in my presence, when I first proposed to remove my wife and children into the country. He had never asked if I were a married man; and talking of family concerns, to a person not interested in them, I always considered a mark of ill-breeding. Suffice it to say, that when I understood your father was looking out for a confidential person to conduct his mercantile concerns, I expressed to him my sincere regret, that I feared my ignorance of the routine of out-of-door business would preclude me from offering my services, which otherwise I should not have had the smallest hesitation in doing, as under his auspices I should feel perfectly satisfied, and I doubted not my ability for conducting correspondence, book-keeping, &c. Mr. Neville promised to overlook all my defects, if I felt an inclination to take the direction of his accompting-house. The salary he of-

ferred was nearly double what I had ever received as an assistant to an academy. My brother George's legacy would enable me to furnish a decent house in the suburbs, where my wife, I hoped, would at last meet a reward for all she had endured on my account.

During my residence with your father, every expectation I had formed was realized. At the end of seven years my salary was double what it had originally been. I did a little business on my own account, which increased my income, without leading us into extravagance.

From my own experience I may affirm, that unless a man has either powerful interest, or a plentiful fortune, giving his children a superior education, is oftentimes a means of unfitting them for the situations which they appear destined to fill. Had I on my outset been under the guidance of such a man as your father, or my early friend

the clergyman, I flatter myself I should not now have to blush for past follies. Without a wife and children to maintain by the produce of my industry, I might have devoted my time to literary pursuits, and probably made no inconsiderable figure as a writer. Necessity curbed the flights of fancy, for hungry mouths must be fed with more solid food than can be procured on fifteen shillings per week till I had puffed myself into fame, or my paymaster had discovered, by the sale of my works, that he had under-rated their value. To do justice to booksellers, I must declare, that I never made a second essay, either in the Row, or elsewhere ; though from a gentleman of considerable fortune, and holding no mean rank in society, I received treatment which excited my indignation, and I am persuaded will yours, in a more eminent degree than that related of Mr. —, on the subject of translation.

A family in Gloucestershire, whose two daughters had been for a considerable time under my tuition in French, writing, and arithmetic, had a brother who wished to make himself popular by suggesting plans of reformation, and better regulation of work-houses, and other charitable institutions. Conversing with me once or twice, he had ingenuity enough to discover that my perceptions were a little quicker than his own, he consequently thought I should have a better mode of impressing on others the convictions that I might wish to establish as permanent ones. On a pretext of asking my opinion as to the accuracy of his statement, he put into my hand a paper, which he wished to circulate through a certain portion of the nobility and gentry, with a view of engaging their attention to his projects. The ideas were good, but the language was execrable, and facts so jumbled with metaphor, that it was scarcely

possible to extract the substance so as to comprehend the nature of the object in view. When he asked my opinion, I frankly told him, that without much revision and correction his readers would be bewildered. On his requesting, as a great favour, that I would take the trouble of writing the piece fairly out for him, and making what alterations I thought proper, I bestowed no small degree of attention on the subject. It took me up a much larger portion of my time and thoughts than if the composition had been entirely my own ; to sift matter of consequence from what is trivial and unimportant, being no easy task to those whose hours for study were so limited as mine. Understanding that it was to be handed about in manuscript, I took infinite pains with the handwriting, which, though free and bold, was extremely well executed. Willing to avoid his thanks, in the first instance,

I left the work, which consisted of many pages, with my pupils, inclosed in a cover, addressed to their uncle, Mr. B——. On my next day of attendance, he did not make his appearance till I was going, when he took me on one side, expressing his great obligations for what I had done, and begging to know how much he was indebted to me for it. This ungentlemanlike question naturally drew from me an exclamation, that I disclaimed reward: the fact was, that the least charge I could have made for time and labour, must have amounted to ten pounds; and I was certain the man who had not delicacy enough to put a note of that value into my hand, without saying a word as to payment, or reward, would think such a charge exorbitant. Judge of my astonishment, my dear Miss Neville, when this man of wealth and ostentatious benevolence,

took out his purse and counted five shillings upon the table as a sufficient payment for what I had done. It was with some difficulty I restrained my feelings so far as to resist taking up the silver and flinging it in the face of the reptile before me. I begged him to give that five shillings towards improving the funds of some of the charities he was strenuous in supporting, for it should never augment my stores. He soon left the country, and I saw him no more ; but six months after, when I presented to a nobleman my bill for teaching his daughter Italian, he observed the similarity between my handwriting and that of the gentleman alluded to in the former paltry transaction ; when his lordship explained that it was from the perusal of my manuscript, he discovered the similarity which Mr. B—— presented to him as his own performance. I related the

story, which, without embellishment, you will perceive was a precious anecdote of a man who appeared to be devoting his time and talents for the benefit of the indigent part of the community. You have now the conclusion of my adventures. I need scarcely point out to you how much I have lamented the changes in your family. The confidence reposed in me by all parties, though truly gratifying to my feelings, has added considerably to my anxiety. Matters are now in that train to relieve me from a situation which gratitude alone could have prompted me to retain. Mr. Neville was my friend, although my master, and a strict disciplinarian. He taught me many useful lessons; and under Providence, whatever provision I may be enabled to make for my family, I shall always consider as proceeding, in a great measure, from my connection with

him. He was truly the character which the *miserly man of benevolence* aimed to represent. They will both have their reward ; and, doubtless, the children of the man who never lost an opportunity of serving a worthy object in distress, will not be without support in the day of their trouble."

Constantia, sensibly affected at this tribute of praise to the memory of one whose name she never heard pronounced without emotion, checked her feelings to thank Somers for his candid avowal of his youthful instability, to which so much of the misfortunes that had obscured him for many years were to be imputed. From a consideration of his sufferings and extraordinary preservation, she saw the sinfulness of doubting the power and goodness of the Almighty, who for wise purposes makes his creatures experience the extremity of distress, at the very mo-

ment that he is about to relieve them by bestowing blessings, which without such severe trials they would not have estimated as they deserved.

CHAP. XVI.

All that is now, hath been before, 'tis true,
 But yet the art, the fashion may be new ;
 Tho' old materials the large palace raise,
 The skilful architect deserves his praise.

SIR CHARLES SEDLEY.

R OCHFORD, the designing artful Rochford, was compelled to admire at a distance the virtue and resolution which he had in vain sought to subdue ; a thousand times did he execrate his own stupidity in neglecting opportunities which he was now conscious were lost for ever. His wife had much to endure from his morose temper, and but for her mother, would have made loud complaints to Lord Darlington on the subject. The departure of Constantia was a theme of universal regret to both families, nor did

Lady Darlington's remarks fail to probe the feelings of her son-in-law, who was conscious that she more than suspected the cause of her declining to visit in Portman-square.

Meanwhile the arrangements of Mr. and Miss Neville were completed; Montagu's ambition leading him to wish for a better residence than he could procure in any genteel part of London at an easy rent, he took a house, with a garden adjoining, in a pleasant part of Hampstead; reserving at the accompting-house a bed for himself, when late engagements in town prevented him from going out at an early enough hour to reach home without danger. His sister's determination to avoid the Rochford's, induced her to comply with his wishes in removing to a spot where it was not probable any of the family were likely to visit.

Mr. Neville having accomplished his wishes in one point, now aimed at get-

ting rid of Somers, who he very justly thought would be a still more rigid censor of his actions than his sister. The independent spirit and honest zeal of the faithful servant of the father, could ill brook the petulant inconsiderate conduct of the son, who, if he had judged wisely, would rather have offered a share of the business to a man so thoroughly acquainted with the nature of it, and respected by all concerned, than by unhandsome treatment, have compelled him to resign a situation, the emoluments attending on which were in no degree adequate to the trust that had devolved to him on the death of his employer, and which he had so exemplarily and honestly discharged.

Unwilling to wound the feelings of Constantia, Mr. Somers accounted to her for his withdrawing from the management of the concern, by stating that a person of her brother's active dis-

position, might get a clerk suitable to his purpose, at a salary considerably lower than he could afford to take, and that justice to his family obliged him to accede to proposals for conducting the business of a gentleman, who being engaged in more pursuits than one, found the difference of forty or fifty pounds a year no object, when compared to the advantages he might derive from the exertions of a person devoted to his interest.

Obliged as Miss Neville had been to the family of Somers, she could not be so selfish as to repine at what might lead to their advancement, though she could not help feeling most poignantly the slight manner in which her brother spoke of the services of his late clerk, and how much occupied he appeared to be with the qualifications of the person whom he had engaged to succeed him. Avoiding as much as possible all difference of opinion with her brother,

she strove to render his home agreeable, entertaining his friends in the best manner she could, while her attention to œconomy never infringed on his comforts, whatever she might submit to when he was from home. The eldest daughter of Somers, on her first removal to Hampstead, she had frequently invited to pass some time with her; the reluctance her requests were complied with by both father and mother, after the connection in business was dissolved, obliged her to give up preferring them.

By the time she had been six months an inhabitant of Hampstead, several of her neighbours came to see her, and though among the number she selected none for intimates, yet, upon the whole, their society was not displeasing. Montagu had that unembarrassed ease of manners, and fluency of speech to all with whom he associated, that he soon became a favourite among the ladies,

who on his account more than her own, sought to cultivate the acquaintance of his sister. He promoted dances, both public and private, was ready to make a party to the play, or at a rubber at whist, as the inclinations of the company he happened to be with pointed. Much as Constantia relished theatrical amusements when judiciously chosen, the fear of meeting Mr. Rochford had hitherto kept her from partaking of them. When, however, told by her brother, that he had secured a box for a night on which Mrs. Siddons was to perform a favourite character, and that a family with whom she had been on friendly terms during their stay at Hampstead, expected her to dine with them at their house in Chatham-place on that day, and were to accompany her to the play, her accustomed caution forsook her, she thanked her brother for his attention, and requested that he would acquaint Mrs. and Miss Mar-

sells' with her acquiescence to their obliging proposal.

The lady at the head of the family in Chatham-place, was one of those provident mothers who are determined that their daughters shall not go without husbands, if by any means they can be procured. Mr. Neville had danced at the Hampstead Assembly with both the Miss Mansells, he had paid to neither of the ladies more attention than he was wont to bestow on others, yet Mrs. Mansell was pretty confident that he only wanted encouragement to declare himself the slave of her eldest daughter, who would have possessed many attractions, if she had not obscured them by practising the most affected arts. To such a character Constantia could be no desirable companion; but without her becoming a visitant of the family in town, the brother could not be so often invited to their parties as they wished. Miss Eliza, the second daughter,

had been much pleased with Miss Neville, and now rejoiced that by her coming to stay a day or two with her, an opportunity offered for paying those attentions which she hoped would secure to her a free access to the house of Mr. Neville, when they returned to Hampstead in the spring.

One of Mrs. Mansell's plans was, never to invite young men whom she fancied admired either of her daughters, when she had ladies with her who might have superior pretensions, and probably occasion their charms to be overlooked. A formal old-bachelor of Mr. Mansell's acquaintance, and Mr. Neville, were the only beaux to escort the ladies to the theatre; Mr. Mansell preferring Lloyd's Coffee-house to listening to the thrilling accents of Melpomene, he took his usual walk thither.

Constantia insisted upon taking the second seat with Miss Eliza and Mr. Benson, the latter having previously

declared that he went to the play with a view of being interested by the performance. Soon absorbed by her own feelings, she no longer thought of encountering the notice of any person whom she wished to avoid. From the stage-box, on the opposite side, however, she perceived more than one opera-glass to be levelled at that part of the house where she sat. On discerning Mr. Athersey, she doubted not that he would take some pains to converse with her, though at that distance he had not chosen to make a bow of recognition. Observing when the curtain dropt at the conclusion of the play, that her old-acquaintance hastily quitted his seat, she prepared herself for many enquiries, and was not a little busied in framing answers to them. Mr. Athersey, it is true, changed his side of the house, but with no view of acknowledging the acquaintance of a lady no longer considered an appen-

dage in the suite of a lady of the first fashion ; he dropped into the next box, just to stare Miss Neville in the face, and to say to his next neighbour, “ Did not we used to meet her at Rochford’s ? what queer set of people does she live with now ? ”

Little as Constantia had been accustomed to regard the attentions of men, of whose morals and intellects she had no very exalted opinion, no observation or experience had led her to expect treatment of this kind from a person in whose society she had so frequently been as in that of Mr. Athersey. The respectability of her situation, in being protected by her brother, added to her own natural vivacity, gave to her manner and conversation an animation which the Mansells’ had never before discovered. Capt. Conolly, a friend of Montagu’s, who had dined with him once or twice at Hampstead, now joined the party, to him she appeared

in a new character, and that the most likely to fix the affections of a son of Neptune, had he not been under the necessity of embarking on an expedition on the following day, from which, though not attended with danger, except from the peril of the sea, he could not return for some months.

The gentleman to whom Mr. Athersey had spoken aloud respecting Miss Neville, happening to be acquainted with Conolly, took advantage of this circumstance to request admission into the box in which he was, that being more favourable for viewing the spectacle to be represented on the stage, than any other not fully occupied; permission being granted, Sir Charles Lumley took the first opportunity of renewing the acquaintance begun in Devonshire-place. Constantia, less elated by this distinction than she had been mortified by the impertinence of his companion, was so frigid and distant in her

replies to Sir Charles, that he found to his great mortification, all hope of discovering her place of residence must depend on Captain Conolly, who he did not know was engaged in the transport service, but concluded he should meet him in the course of a day or two.

Obliged to return to his own party in a private box near the orchestra, Sir Charles took his leave, rejoicing as he said, to see Miss Neville after so long an absence, during which interval he had in vain sought to learn the spot she had chosen for her retreat. The unexpected movement of the baronet had totally discomfited Mr. Athersey, who now, to his infinite regret, saw that all attempts to conciliate the lady by subsequent attention, would not obliterate from her remembrance his slighting manner of speaking of her, when he considered her as a person "whom

nobody knew." Miss Eliza Mansell, who had heard the enquiries of Sir Charles respecting Lady Darlington, &c. was transported with delight at finding herself in such Right Honourable company, while she wondered how it happened that her friend had never mentioned her titled acquaintance; a species of forbearance which she could not have practised herself, and therefore thought most surprising in another.

In handing the ladies to their carriage, Captain Conolly, with the frankness peculiar to his country, whispered to Miss Neville his regrets at being ordered on actual service at the very moment when he wished to devote himself to her's; but he hoped, on his return, to be admitted by her to pay his respects at Hampstead. She assured him every friend of her brother's was a welcome guest there, and she trusted that, while performing a professional duty, he

would be amply repaid for any sacrifice or personal inconvenience to which he might be thence subjected. Arrived at the door of Mrs. Mansell's coach, no farther conversation could ensue, and so little impression did the gallantry of the sailor make on the mind of the fair lady to whom it was addressed, that she imagined he thought it incumbent on him to talk in the same strain to all his female acquaintance under five and twenty.

After supper, when her brother was about to take leave, Constantia asked him if he would accompany her to Hampstead the next day, or should she expect to find him there in the evening, and go out at the hour that suited her own convenience best? To this speedy termination of the visit, Mrs. Mansell put a flat negative. She had engaged a party to meet Mr. and Miss Neville the following evening, and she hoped they would at least give her the next

day, when, if they pleased, herself and daughters would accompany them to some public place. Constantia, merely passive, professed her time to be quite at the disposal of her brother, who was too easy of compliance on occasions where opposition would have been a virtue, to resist offers of this nature. Miss Eliza caught at the proposition of her mother in regard to a public place; she had never been in the pit at the Opera, and thought going in company with a lady who was likely to know the frequenters of it, would be charming. Among the visitors of the next evening, she doubted not meeting some who would gladly be of the party, and unite their influence with her's to prevail on her mother to go thither. Circumstances proved propitious to the wishes of the Miss Mansells', Montagu declared himself at their service, as did a gentleman who had partaken so frequently of Mr. Mansell's dinners and

suppers, that he could not have declined accompanying his daughters, without endangering his being struck off the list of the invited.

Miss Mansells' had enjoyed no opportunities of mixing in very high, or enlarged circles, but their style of acquaintance was respectable, and their own appearance, as well as that of their mother, indicated that they were gentlewomen; the desire to appear so fashionable, as to be indifferent to amusement, was the prevailing wish of the elder Miss Mansell, and though in reality she felt no small degree of pleasure in listening to good acting, or music when well executed; she affected to be entirely occupied by her own thoughts, and the company to whom she had been talking, and to be incapable of giving an opinion on the entertainment of the evening.

“ Thus,” thought Constantia, as the coach stopped at the door of the Opera

House, “ am I brought forward to observation, when I most wished to escape it; even the good Mrs. Ormsby’s enquiries, should I meet her, will be painful in the extreme for me to answer.” The delight of Miss Eliza, at every object which presented itself for a time, diverted her attention from retrospections that were by no means calculated to exhilarate the spirits. The boxes which were reserved for Lady Darlington and Mrs. Rochford, during the time she was of their parties, appearing now occupied by persons unknown to her, Constantia became less abstracted, and was desirous of informing her companions, as far as her knowledge of the fashionable world would permit, who were the persons that made the most brilliant appearance in the scene before them.

Sir Charles Lumley, from one of the side scenes, where he had planted himself, to view the company and in-

commode the performers, discerned Miss Neville; he was not many minutes in taking his place on the row next that on which she sat, bowing, as he did so, with infinite condescension to the whole party, whom he conveniently chose to recollect he had before seen at Drury Lane Theatre. Miss Eliza, with whom the baronet had then conversed, made up by her suavity of manners for the distance of her fair friends. Sir Charles determining to pay his devoirs where they seemed most acceptable, gratified the vanity of both mother and daughter, while the elder Miss Mansell, who had been languishingly bewitching to Montagu, suddenly assumed a lively tone, that her pretty nothings might reach the ears of the man of fashion, thus attracted to their family circle; the poor man who had been led to sacrifice his half-guinea, lest he should lose his seat at the table of Mr. Mansell, looked so

chagrined and crest-fallen, that Constantia, from mere compassion, exerted herself to entertain him.

In this manner were the company disposed of, when at the conclusion of the last grand-ballet, they arose to adjourn to the coffee-room. Mr. Vanderdruzen, in return for the civilities of Miss Neville, kept close to her side, as did Montagu to that of Mrs. Mansell, leaving her daughters to the care of the person who had engrossed their attention, to the total disregard of those under whose protection they had left their father's house. Ladies of ton would have been nowise embarrassed at discovering the effect of an evening's flirtation, hanging on the arm of each other, they could have confidently sauntered anywhere, staring those out of countenance who felt incapable of acting in the same manner. Miss Mansells' had never been in the coffee-room of the Opera House, and were

not a little ashamed at being obliged to confess their ignorance to Sir Charles, who with perfect urbanity flattered himself, they would in future often grace it by their presence.

Mrs. Mansell now thought it requisite to look after her daughters, when to her surprise she saw only Miss Neville and Mr. Vanderdrusen, a crowd having separated them from the party, though they were not far behind, and by their appearance soon quieted the fears which she professed to entertain for their safety.

Lady Selina Ormsby passing at this moment, she nodded familiarly to Sir Charles, while she surveyed Miss Neville and her associates with a freedom that put the Miss Mansells' to the blush, and roused the indignation of her at whom the affront was principally levelled. Constantia impatient to be gone, requested her brother to enquire if the carriage could draw up,

forgetting at the moment that Mrs. Mansell, who felt no inclination to depart, was the person first to be consulted on the occasion. Sir Charles quitting the young ladies as they were now seated by their mother, to whom Mr. Vanderdrusen was pointing out a foreign ambassador and his lady, again sought to subdue the reserve of Miss Neville, by requesting to know where he might have the honour of enquiring after her health; "I live in the country, sir," was the laconic reply. "But the ladies you are with, they reside in town, and have informed me that you are on a visit to them." "Which ends to-morrow," said Constantia hastily. "They tell me they expect you to repeat it."

Before she could reply, or even discern the purport of his last words, she felt herself sick at heart, for who but Mr. Rochford himself was approaching her with a disengaged air, as if

nothing had occurred to make his presence disagreeable. " Give me leave, said Mr. Rochford to Constantia, to conduct you to Lady Darlington and Mrs. Rochford; Lady Selina Ormsby informed them you were in this part of the room, and I was deputed to request you to join them for a few minutes, if your friends," bowing to Mrs. Mansell, " will entrust me with the care of you for so long a time." That lady, who had heard that it was the picture of Mrs. Rochford which Miss Neville wore, concluded the gratification to both parties would be great, she therefore begged to be no hindrance to a meeting of friends.

How did Constantia regret that her impatience had deprived her of Montagu's presence, at the very moment when it was most essential to her peace that he should appear; agitated beyond measure, she, however, was compelled to follow Rochford, who while he up-

braided her for her cruelty, endeavoured to assure her, that in future he should not breathe a wish beyond that of being admitted to her society in common with other friends. Unable to articulate a word in reply, most gladly did Constantia accept of the offered hand of Mrs. Rochford, who rising to meet her, unfeignedly expressed the joy which the sight of her occasioned.

Any where else the person to whom she was speaking would have found relief in tears; unused to repress emotions that were notwithstanding too acute for utterance, but for the support of Lady Darlington, who requested her to sit down by her, Miss Neville must have fallen on the floor; to spare her feelings, the mother appeared as if they had been in the habit of seeing each other every day, while the daughter asked if Mr. Neville was still in England.

The gentleman thus enquired for

coming up at the moment, Mrs. Rochford begged leave to introduce him to her husband, who, she said, concluded his reception in Portman-square, on his first visit, had been so unfriendly as to prevent its repetition. Montagu always occupied by present objects, had never asked his sister any question about the Rochfords, since she declined going there, when an inhabitant of Somers's House; he therefore assured both Mr. and Mrs. Rochford, that it was only the pressure of business that had occasioned an apparent neglect of friends to whom he was so much indebted, and that he should eagerly repair his fault, by paying his respects to them at their own house, now that he knew they were come to town for the winter.

Constantia had in the meantime given her address to Lady Darlington, who promised that she would call upon her at Hampstead, accompanied by a

young friend who had not forgotten her. Montagu recollecting that Mrs. Mansell's carriage would impede the progress of others, begged the excuse of all present, for abruptly taking away his sister, as her absence, he feared, would prove inconvenient to her friends, who were ready to leave the house when he came in quest of her. Taking her brother's arm, Constantia was reassured, and able to pay her compliments without embarrassment, promising, as she tripped away, that he should not go alone to Portman-square.

Mrs. Mansell, on her return, with more truth than politeness, accused Miss Neville of having first sent for the carriage and then gone away from her, which would oblige the party to walk some distance, for the coachman had not been able to retain his place; this it seems had been Mr. Vanderdrusen's intelligence, who advised no farther delays, lest the access to the

coach might be rendered still more difficult. Mrs. Mansell, protected by Mr. Neville, got between the horses and carriages, as did Miss Neville and Vanderdrusen, the coachmen very civilly restraining their horses to accommodate ladies, who fully aware that their safety lay in quietness and dispatch, kept their fears, if they had any, in their own breasts. The shrieks of the elder Miss Mansel however, not only terrified her sister, but so far disconcerted a pair of young horses, just by her, that they began to kick and plunge in such a manner as to create the danger which before had been ideal.

Montagu returning to assist Sir Charles, found him scarcely able to support Miss Mansell, who to shew the delicacy of her nerves, had fainted in his arms. Eliza's salts and fan made her open her eyes, only, however, to exclaim, that she would not again ven-

ture off the foot-pavement. At the instant, the cry of " Sir Charles Lumley's carriage stops the way !" prompted the baronet to hope the ladies would do him the honour of allowing him to accompany them home, which mode of settling the business Montagu thought the best that could be devised.

Seeing the belles and their beau safe in the chariot, he trudged off to rejoin his sister, a path still more replete with terrific objects than when he had trodden it a few minutes before; for the horses then so skittish, had run up against a carriage, and driven the pole of that to which they were harnessed, through the back pannel of the other; luckily both of the carriages were unoccupied, so that the oaths and execrations of the coachmen were not mingled with the cries of women, or the groans of those who had sustained injury either to their property or persons.

Mrs. Mansell terrified for her daughters, sincerely rejoiced to hear from Montagu that they were under such protection, while she hoped Jessy would have recollection enough to detain the gentleman, that she might thank him for his politeness, should they arrive first in Chatham-place, which was to be expected from their own carriage being stationary, notwithstanding all the efforts of the coachman to get on. Constantia, sensible that the disasters of the evening were in a great measure to be imputed to her, secretly determined that this should be her last exhibition at the Opera, or any other public place, for some months to come.

After many interruptions, most gladly did the company in Mr. Mansell's coach find themselves at the door of its master. In the parlour sat the two ladies and their gallant squire; fortunately for them, Mr. Mansell had been detained longer at the club than usual, or

his salutation at finding them there without their mother, might have sounded rather harsh to the courtly ears of Sir Charles. Having once obtained admittance, he knew he could make what use he pleased in future of the privilege; and discovering from the simple exclamation of the youngest sister, that papa's being out was a favourable circumstance, he wisely took his leave, hoping the ladies would soon recover from the effects of their fright.

How vastly obliging, and superlatively polite Sir Charles had been, was the subject of discourse during supper. Vanderdrusen remaining silent, though Montagu less scrupulous, declared he saw no reason why one woman should be so much more careful of herself than another; he supposed their lives were of equal value to society, and of this he was certain, that but for her sister, Miss Eliza would have followed when her mother and her friend led the

way. This attack produced a retort from Miss Mansell, which obliged Constantia to interfere, imputing the whole blame to herself, for having been drawn aside to speak to Mrs. Rochford, therefore she, as the offending party, had to intreat Miss Mansell to excuse the warmth of her brother, who from having gone forward with her mother, saw not as she did, that the passage closed almost immediately on the passing through of the second couple.

Harmony being now restored, and Mr. Mansell come in, the company separated in tolerable good-humour; Constantia less delighted with the occurrences of the last six hours than either of the females who accompanied her to the King's Theatre, meditated on them more deeply, because more accustomed to reflection. What Sir Charles Lumley's motives for his attention to herself and friends were, she was at a loss to conceive, for though al-

ways perfectly well-bred, he had never before offered her any civilities, but such as were her due, from being an inmate of the house where he was received as a visitor.

In the twelvemonths that had intervened, since Miss Neville quitted the protection of Mrs. Rochford, many changes had taken place among their acquaintance. Sir Charles, like too many others, had bled so freely at Brookes's and elsewhere, that his only hope of retaining his consequence in the circles of fashion, arose from the probability of his persuading some heiress or rich widow, to bestow her person and fortune on him, in exchange for his title; affection on either side being one ingredient of matrimonial comfort for which he did not intend to stipulate. The appearance of the Mansells' bespoke opulence; their acquaintance was therefore to be assiduously cultivated; for though neither of the

young ladies should have portions large enough to tempt him to wear their chains, through their means he might form a city connection, and learn the names of those who were worth pursuing. While the Miss Mansells' were dreaming of conquest and future exaltation, after repeating to each other the *bons-mots* of their supposed admirer, though neither could tell which was the favoured Dulcinea, he was coolly calculating on the length of time his chariot could run without fresh supplies.

More than ever resolved on returning home, Constantia had requested her brother to order a post-chaise to be at the door of Mr. Mansell between eleven and twelve, that she might first pay some visits, and call for him in time to get home to dinner, at a shop in Holborn, where they had dealt for several years, and were in the habit of leaving parcels, &c. After having been seen

at the Theatre and Opera-house, Constantia wisely judged that those of her former acquaintances who had called to enquire after her at Somers's, would consider themselves slighted, if they did not hear from herself where she lived, when it was known that she presided as mistress of her brother's house, consequently could receive whom she pleased.

Telling Mrs. Mansell at breakfast, that indispensable engagements required her to return to Hampstead that day, she was no longer pressed to prolong her visit, though with great friendliness, Mrs. Mansell entreated her to come as often as it suited her own convenience, a bed being always at her service, and she knew no young lady she would be so happy to receive under her roof as Miss Neville. To this obliging speech, a suitable return was made by Constantia, who rose to prepare for her departure, Miss Eliza following her

out of the room on the pretext of assisting at her toilette, though in reality to talk of the Baronet, who she was surprised to observe, seemed to have no place in the memory of his old acquaintance. In a few words Miss Neville declared all she knew of the gentleman, which amounted to little more than his being considered sufficiently respectable to be admitted to the domestic circles of Mr. Rochford and Lord Darlington, as well as to be a constant attendant on the splendid public entertainments given by them and others of equal consequence at the west end of the town. Of his private conduct or principles, she had heard no person speak, therefore she concluded they were not glaringly dissolute, though from her own experience of the laxity of morals among persons of fashion, she could not help wishing to warn both her and her sister, that they were not to sanction their intro

ducing Sir Charles to their father from his being an acquaintance of her's or her brother's. To the latter he was then wholly unknown, and likely to remain so; gentlemen of his rank in life finding companions enough among the idle, without descending to seek for any in the accompting-house of the merchant.

Eliza, a little disconcerted at this grave advice, said "if her mother approved of receiving Sir Charles, she supposed her father would make proper enquiries, for he was very particular as to the character of the gentlemen who visited at his house." "He cannot be too much so, my dear," said Constantia; "be assured, our parents know much better than we do who are worthy of our regard; when bereft of the protection of such interested kind friends, we then discern our own insufficiency for appreciating the worth of those with whom we associate;

though I am not a great many years older than your sister, I have seen more of the world and its ways, than many women do in the course of a long life. I do not wish to make you suspicious, but to induce you to hearken to the counsels of age, although in doing so, you may find the conduct of those who have made themselves agreeable to you arraigned." "Thank you, my dear Miss Neville," said Eliza, "pray be so good as tell me if I acted wrong last night; Mr. Neville was in the right to say we might have followed you, and so I should, and have taken Mr. Vanderdrusen's arm, if he had even offered it; Jessy said he was glumpish, and in his airs, and she would stay with Sir Charles on purpose to teaze him." "Let your own good sense direct you, and be not dictated to by your sister," continued Constan-
tia. "I have observed at Hampstead, that Mr. Vanderdrusen was attracted

towards your family, rather than that of any other where there were young ladies. He seems amiable, has the countenance of your father, and though not now an independant man, has, I am told, great expectations from a rich uncle well known to all your family; he was seriously hurt at the opera last night to see both your sister and yourself so much elated by the casual attentions of a man, who, take my word for it, has no views in coming here but to serve some purpose, which time alone can develope. You are young enough to think deeply of Vanderdrusen, or any other pretender to your favour, only remember, my dear, that though a woman can bestow her heart and hand but on one man, it is not the less incumbent on her to act towards those who may seek to inspire her with tender sentiments, in such a manner that, though he fail in the object of his pursuit, he may esteem her as a friend, and be un-

able to accuse her of trifling with his happiness."

Eliza again thanked Miss Neville, and regretted that they were so soon to part. "That need not be," said the latter, "if you could bear to give up the delights of London, and accompany me home for a few days, should your mother give her consent." "That I could with pleasure," said Eliza, eagerly. "Pray ask her before the chaise comes, or she will say I have not time to get ready?" Mrs. Mansell, when applied to, said she must consult her husband, who thinking the inviter a well behaved young woman, left the decision to the inclination of his wife. That lady being now fully sensible of Miss Neville's value, because she saw her noticed by a few titled people, considered this visit of her younger daughter as one means of strengthening a connection which she wished to render a permanent one. Not the least pleased

person of the family, by this arrangement, was the elder Miss Mansell, who considered the day as her own, and, in idea, she was sending cards of invitation to all her friends, dated from St. James's-square, not knowing that the very small house which the baronet inhabited, though situated on that fashionable spot, could be contained in her father's dining-room.

CHAP. XVII.

Why, give him gold enough, and marry him to a puppet, or an aglet baby, or an old trot with ne'er a tooth in her head, tho' she have as many diseases as two and fifty horses: why, nothing comes amiss, so money comes withal.

SHAKESPEARE.

AMONG her former acquaintance, Miss Neville was only successful in meeting Miss Plimpton at home; and her reception of one whom she cordially hated, was as just a satire on female friendship, as if an estimate of the worth of an amiable part of society were to be formed from the obtrusive conduct and loose principles of a few individuals, while the modest merit and intrinsic goodness of others prompts them to retire from public observation.

In regretting their long separation, Miss Plimpton failed not to enumerate

how grievously she was disappointed in not seeing Miss Neville at Brighton. " It was only," added she, " at Mrs. Rochford's masquerade I had a glimpse of you, and that at too late an hour to make myself known. Mr. Rochford I met almost every day at the library; he was vastly entertaining. Pray what kept you so close at home?" Constan-
 tia then briefly related the nature of her engagements in Sussex; and that on Mrs. Rochford's recovery, when she could have had pleasure in recognizing any friend of her own, Miss Plimpton had left the place, and but for examining the subscription books, she would not have known of her having visited it. " One word at the masquerade," she continued, " would have sufficed to say where you were to be found; for at all times Mrs. Rochford would have permitted me the use of a carriage to pay a morning visit to a friend." Miss Plimpton extricated herself in the best

manner she was able, though even her usual command of countenance forsook her, conscious that, as the *Weird Sister*, it was impossible to have acknowledged herself to the person on whose credulity she had so successfully practised.

Among a train of beaux whom she mentioned as library acquaintance, when at Brighton, Miss Plimpton named Mr. De Eresby, a gentleman of the law, whom she had since frequently met, and believed he was the Highlander at the masquerade, though he had denied to her that her conjecture was well founded. So much had the mind of Constantia been engrossed by serious cares since the arrival of her brother, that she had almost forgotten her anxious wish to know the name and designation of the person who represented the "*Bonny Scot*;" this communication, so accidentally made, recalled to her mental eye the counte-

nance of her early friend De Eresby, while she cherished a hope that his namesake, though unlike him in the lineaments of the face, might bear him some affinity in the qualities of the head and heart ; nor did she conclude this little trip to the regions of imagination, without indulging a hope that some fortuitous event would enable her, from personal observation, to prove whether he was deserving of those eulogiums which she had involuntarily bestowed on him, in discovering that his profession was not that of a gambler.

The visit being ended, Miss Plimpton intreated Miss Neville to consider her as at all times happy to see her, and that she should take the first opportunity of renewing an intercourse from which she had formerly derived so much pleasure.

On calling for her brother, Miss Neville was a little disappointed to find that he had left a message for her, say-

ing he could not be with her till the next day. She feared her friend Eliza Mansell would discover, that Hampstead and its vicinity wore a very desolate appearance, when under the dominion of winter's frost, without family society to enliven the picture. In this she was mistaken, the young lady declaring she could not tell when she had passed so pleasant a day; for while Miss Neville talked the time flew away swifter than she had ever before known it. Having no reason to doubt the sincerity of her companion, Constantia was not willing to put her to so severe a test in future, by allowing the novelty of her conversation to wear off, which she well knew would inevitably happen, if the next day and evening were spent *tête-à-tête*. The day admitting of perambulating without doors, she called on several of her neighbours, who promised, on being requested, to take their tea with her. Not doubting that her

brother would arrive in time to do the honours of the house, she thought an unexpected party of this kind would be peculiarly acceptable, as he frequently complained of her want of sociality, and wondered how she contrived to pass her winter evenings so much at home and alone.

When the party were assembled, the non-appearance of their landlord seemed to some a matter of disquiet. Various as were the excuses framed by his sister, in her own mind for his absence, to her guests she simply stated her inadvertence in not apprizing him of the pleasure she expected in their company. Her own exertions to please, soon dissipated the chagrin which at first she feared would have clouded the meeting. A ring at the gate, and then her brother's usual footstep in the hall, without his appearing, after a proper interval, to pay his compliments in the drawing-room, obliged Miss Neville to

intreat the excuses of her friends while she inquired if any accident had happened to her brother. She found him seated in gloomy thoughtfulness. All her spirits forsook her at the sight. "Montagu, what is the matter, are you indisposed?" were all the words she could utter. "Too much so to see strangers," was the reply. "I hear you have a house full; when they are dismissed, perhaps I may be able to talk to you; I must not detain you now."

Conscious that this was true, Constantia, with a clouded brow, returned to her party, expressing to them her regret, that sudden indisposition deprived her brother of the power of joining the social circle, an apology which, she trusted, his friends would readily admit of, the loss being so much on his side. However various sentiments might be entertained as to the nature of Mr. Neville's complaints, whether

they originated in a fit of the sullens, at finding his house filled with company when he wished to be alone, or he were really ill, all were of one opinion, that it was proper to depart; and, in a few minutes, Miss Neville was at liberty to attend her brother, requesting Eliza to amuse herself with looking over a new publication till she could rejoin her.

At the parlour-door Constantia met her brother, who said he was coming up to her, in the hope that the drawing-room would be more comfortable than the parlour, where he had been so long sitting, which was so infernally cold, he believed it had given him a fit of the ague. "I am sorry," said Constantia, advancing, "that Miss Eliza Mansell, being above-stairs, obliges you to remain here contrary to your inclination." "Eliza Mansell! Why, what the devil brought her here?" Recollecting himself, Montagu begged pardon of his sister, who, he hoped,

would excuse his violent manner of expressing himself, when she learnt that Bellmour's bills received last week, the sight of which had given him such spirits, had been this day returned noted for non-acceptance, and that some other disappointments, he feared, would prevent him from making good his engagements to the creditors for the second payment, which would be due in a few days; and had Bellmour's bills been accepted, they would have been received as cash on a discount, though not due for three months.

Overpowered by this unlooked-for misfortune, how poignantly did Constantia lament her having renewed acquaintance with a world in which it appeared she had now no resting place. "Is there no mode of extricating yourself from this cruel dilemma?" she exclaimed. "Can I be of service? There is some property in the funds vested in my name, the interest of

which I never touched but to buy mourning for my father. If part, or the whole, of that will suffice, pray make use of it; perhaps, by-and-by, you may be able to replace the sum, if not, we must stand or fall together." Something like remorse impeded the thanks which Montagu essayed to pay for this spontaneous tribute of affection from his sister, so much the more to be valued, as though he meditated to solicit her aid, he scarcely knew how to frame an excuse for the selfishness of his proceedings, which she appeared little disposed to investigate. After profuse expressions of gratitude for her goodness, the worthy brother insisted on giving his acknowledgment for the money, as lent to carry on trade, on which he would pay her interest quarterly; and he hoped her adventure would prove propitious, for he was sure she deserved to succeed; and as there would be a surplus, after paying the

next instalment, he would note down the use to which it was put, that she might judge if Fortune, when solicited, would be as bountiful of her favours as Nature had been, an union of opposite interests rarely to be met with; so she must not complain of being hardly dealt by, should the issue be unfavourable.

This florid style of speaking conveyed no satisfaction to the heart of Constantia. She preferred actions to words; nor could she comprehend the meaning of the instantaneous change wrought on her brother, by her proposing to give up into his possession a sum which would always have kept her above want. The precipitancy with which it appeared necessary the measure should be carried into execution, would preclude her from getting the opinion of Somers on its expediency; “but whether he approves or not,” exclaimed Constantia, internally, “my

word is 'given, and that I must consider sacred."

● Volatile and inconsistent as Mr. Neville was, he had penetration enough to discover the fluctuation of his sister's sentiments ; for he must have been a sorry judge of physiognomy, if he had not, during the time of his residence with her, perceived that her features were plastic, though under no dominion but that of the predominant feelings of the moment. Had his been as true an index of his heart, he would have possessed little influence over her, of whose generous susceptibility he was now taking such undue advantages. She would have seen lurking in his eye the demon which presides over the gaming-table, at whose instigation he had the preceding night lost that sum which occasioned his present embarrassments, and to repair which he had been striving to ascertain the value of his remittances from Jamaica, in order

that, if considered good, he might raise money on them in time for fulfilling the engagements, which, but for his ill-luck at billiards, he would have been enabled to do from other resources.

How carefully should all who value their reputation in this world, and their happiness in the next, guard against encouraging a propensity to a vice, in its very nature so destructive to the interests of society; in this vortex we daily see ingulphed innocent victims, whose selfish fathers, when they have run their mad career, make the *coup de grace*, by putting a pistol to their head. May the women of Great Britain, of the middle ranks, shew to those of exalted station, an example worthy of their imitation! Among themselves cards are seldom played but *pour passer le tems*. Let them banish from their society, all who make what was intended for an innocent recreation a species of traffick. The malignant ex-

ultation with which a mistake is detected, when by that means the success of a bet is rendered no longer doubtful, sometimes give an impression of the person so thrown off her guard, which no actual knowledge of her good qualities, and friendliness of disposition, can wholly eradicate. The collision of two impetuous spirits, on such an occasion, will throw a gloom over a whole company, and both parties must be in the wrong when either overleap the bounds prescribed to them by good-breeding. Detestable in a man, as is the practice of playing for a deeper stake than may be lost with perfect convenience, how much more is it to be reprehended in the fair sex, who should drive far from them the baleful passion of avarice, which is the root of that fondness for play, that leads many titled dames (to their eternal disgrace be it spoken) to open their doors to a set of harpies, who cannot else-

where so successfully run down their prey. *Reform* or *ruin*, are in truth here the only alternatives, and too soon will it be displayed to the public, who have made their election without first considering the consequences to themselves and families.

Next morning at breakfast Miss Eliza Mansell remarked to herself, that all men of business had their thoughtful moods, and when she saw the little red-book was resorted to, she wondered if Mr. Neville was also a frequenter of Lloyd's, a place so peculiarly attractive in the eyes of her father. A letter by the post from her sister, made her withdraw as soon as the meal was concluded, and gave to the brother and sister an opportunity of transacting the business began the preceding night—a power to dispose of her part of Mr. Hayman's present, and to appropriate the cash as he judged most conducive to his interest, being now vested in

Montagu, he betook himself to town, fully resolved that he would apply diligently to business, and that his sister should not be a loser by her confidence in his honour.

The news Eliza had to communicate, made her eager for the departure of Mr. Neville, which she was no sooner assured of, than she ran into the parlour, to say, she hoped Miss Neville was not engaged the following Thursday, for her mother and her sister were going to an assembly in town, to which Sir Charles was to accompany them, and if Mr. Neville and his sister would go too, she would get tickets for them all. At a season of less perplexity, Constantia might have referred to her brother for a decision, but circumstanced as he was, she hesitated not a moment declining the invitation, and as she shewed not the smallest curiosity at the mention of Sir Charles's name, the young lady was obliged to

be silent as to his visits in Chatham-place, a most elaborate account of which Jessy had taken infinite pains to write, for the purpose of mortifying Miss Neville, who she saw repulsed in him all advances to intimacy, and concluded that this reserve was occasioned by a fear of her superior beauty and attractions, if he visited her while a guest at their house. The foolish girl reasoned thus weakly on most subjects where men were concerned, she was never without a lover, though the individuals singled out by the fertility of her own imagination, to figure as innamoratos, never thought of her but as Mr. Mansell's daughter, who, if highly portioned, might be worth pursuing, not without a hope, that as a matron, the airs and graces of maidhood would be relinquished, and a more equable deportment assumed.

In the evening Montagu returned in excellent spirits, telling his sister that

stocks being high, he had sold out to advantage, and that on second thoughts he did not mean to take more than was absolutely necessary to assist him in paying off the demand about to be liquidated, the remainder she could intrust to Mr. Somers, or any person in whom she placed confidence, for in his hands it would be so locked up, that when required by her for any particular purpose, it might not be in his power to command the sum; a circumstance that would distress him, fully as much as it was probable it would be inconvenient to her. Thanking her brother for his consideration, she declared, that no person could she so soon confide any little property she might be possessed of as to Somers, of whose disinterested regard for herself and family, she had received such convincing proofs.

To get rid of such serious subjects, Montagu asked what was become of

her fair friend, whose family he had that day dined with, and had promised for her, that she would pass a few days there the next week, and go to an assembly expected to be very brilliant, to which also Mrs. Mansell had undertaken to get a subscriber's ticket for him. "Inconsiderate son of a prudent but unfortunate father!" would have been the sister's exclamation, had she believed that appeals of this nature could have inspired a juster train of thinking, and a more consistent mode of conduct. Sensible that her brother was not of a disposition to debar himself from enjoyments, that he might the more effectually attend to what is vulgarly called the *main chance*, Constan-tia very properly made no objection to joining a family party, in company with whom no extraordinary expence could be incurred. Miss Eliza, on being informed of this change in her friend's determination, rejoiced that she had

been so occupied during the day, as not to have time to write to her sister, for she would certainly have stated the little probability of their being favoured with her company in town. Mr. Neville, by his lively conversation, compensated for his taciturnity at breakfast ; nor did Eliza Mansell fail to declare to his sister, that he was one of the most agreeable men she had ever known.

This being the state of affairs at Hampstead, it required no exertion of eloquence on the part of Miss Neville, to prevail on her guest to prolong her visit, till the day preceding the assembly, at which time she offered to attend her to Chatham-place, there to remain for a few days. In pursuance of this plan, when she entered the room where sat Miss Mansell to receive her, Constantia was nowise elated to observe that she interrupted a *tête-à-tête* with Sir Charles. The ease of the baronet

recalled the smiles which the interruption had nearly chased from the vacant countenance of the lady, who fancied herself the envy of all who knew she had attracted the attention of an inhabitant of St. James's-square.

After paying some compliments to Miss Neville, whom he hoped to meet with her friends the next day, through whose kindness he was to be admitted of the dancing party, Sir Charles made his bow and departed, to the no small mortification of Miss Mansell, who was pretty confident, that, but for this unlucky intrusion, she should have had a declaration in form ; while there had not even been an opportunity for him to solicit the honour of her hand in the dance, her mother having quitted the room but an instant before the arrival of the two ladies.

Wrapped up in her fancied importance, Miss Mansell condescended not

to pay those attentions which politeness enjoins from the well-bred, though where the heart is fraught with proper affections, and the mind has received no wrong bias, they are practised by those who have had no instructors, but their own desire to contribute to the comfort and happiness of those with whom they associate. Eliza feeling her sister's rudeness, was most assiduous to conceal it from the observation of the person whom such behaviour must offend; in this laudable endeavour she so far succeeded as to determine Miss Neville for her sake to overlook petulance and conceit which had nearly the effect of exciting risibility. Her mother's loquacity, and the good-humour of her sister and her friend, so completely disconcerted Miss Mansell, that very early in the evening she requested permission to retire to her chamber, pleading in excuse for doing

so a cold, which she must endeavour to get rid of, lest she should not be able to go out the next evening.

At breakfast, Miss Mansell's indisposition of both body and mind seemed to have vanished, her countenance was so full of smiles and bewitching graces, it bore little resemblance to that she had worn the preceding day. Mr. Mansell presenting the tickets to his wife, said, " he hoped she had contrived to make up a whist party for him; he did not like to play with strangers, and he would soon tire of looking at the dancers." This being answered to the satisfaction of the worthy merchant, he asked if any person but Mr. Neville was to dine with them; a negative here was as pleasant as the affirmative to the former question. Most contrary to his judgment was the encouragement given to the visits of Sir Charles, who he never suspected of any deeper views than that of *smoking the*

Cit; a man of plain understanding, Mr. Mansell, for the sake of leading a quiet life, gave the reins of government too much into the hands of his wife, who though fully competent, as she thought herself, for guiding a much more complicated machine, would have sometimes consulted her own and family's interest, by having a greater respect for the advice and opinion of her husband.

Equipped for conquest did Miss Mansell enter the ball-room of —— Sir Charles leading the matron of the party to the upper end of it, where only seats for the ladies could be procured. The country-dances having begun, many of the benches had been removed to enlarge the space allotted for that purpose. Mr. Neville, who had engaged Eliza for his partner, now claimed her promise, and Mr. Vanderdrusen solicited the honour of Miss Neville's hand, having reserved himself for that purpose,

on hearing from her brother that she was to be at the assembly. Sir Charles being attracted to a lady with a profusion of diamonds, who though old and ugly, seemed by her dress and conversation to be seeking admirers, found himself a little hampered at discovering that Miss Mansell was evidently waiting to be asked by him to join the dancers, " I am ashamed to confess," said the politic Sir Charles, " that I seldom or ever put any lady's politeness to so severe a test, as to ask her to dance with so listless a creature as I know myself to be ; if, however, madam, you will prevail on your daughter to stand up with such an indifferent partner, I doubt not, that with her assistance I can get through one dance."

Mrs. Mansell assented, while her daughter coloured with vexation at perceiving that Miss Neville had already arrived to the top of the set, therefore it was only her sister she could displace

by the rank of her partner. During the dance, Mr. and Mrs. Mansell adjourned to the card-room ; leaving the young folks to their own discretion, they were themselves soon chained to the magic circle in which the four aces hold their court. Sir Charles got to the end of the set, complaining as he *loitered*, rather than *danced* down, of the intense heat and excessive fatigue which he endured. As if to complete the task imposed upon him as quickly as possible, after accompanying his fair partner to the room where refreshments were distributed, and leaving her to the care of Mr. Neville, he begged leave to withdraw to a less crowded one, for he was oppressed even to suffocation.

Inflated, vain, and empty as was Miss Mansell, she clearly saw that the baronet could have footed it away for hours, had he been so inclined ; certain that for the remainder of the evening

she must sit still or provide herself another partner, she sought to converse with the managers, to whom she hinted her unengaged state. Before, however, they could accomplish what she wished, the second dance was nearly at an end, and, dire to relate! no inquiry did the polite and delicate Sir Charles think it necessary to make respecting one by whose influence his admission to the ball had been secured.

He had his own game to play, for which the room appropriated for cards, was, in his opinion, a better field than that occupied by the dancers. Thither he perceived, by the words that fell in his hearing from the lady with the diamonds, she had bent her steps, and he also observed in her train an officer in regimentals, with whom he was well acquainted. Dashing into the midst of the company with that easy assurance which distinguishes the man of

fashion from those who seldom mix in the gay circles westward of Temple-bar, Sir Charles chatted to Mr. and Mrs. Mansell with the freedom which long intimacy authorizes. This was a sufficient introduction to the notice of those around them, from some of whom he learnt that the object he came to the room in pursuit of, was a rich West-India widow, who having buried two husbands, was supposed to be very well inclined to take a third.

Going directly up to the table where she sat, he was soon acknowledged by Captain Smith, then her partner at whist. The title arrested her attention, and the condescending smile into which she relaxed her harsh features, encouraged the Baronet to place himself beside her chair. The rings, bracelets, &c. which she wore, and the five guinea pieces used by her for marking the game, made a sudden impression on the heart of the needy Baronet, who

found no difficulty in gaining access to her ear, nor did he fail to ingratiate himself into her good opinion, by having recourse to the grossest flattery.

Requested to cut in when the rubber was concluded, he declined the civility, though he offered to bet guineas on the odd tricks, or to take any stake on the rubber, which the parties chose, declaring he should be on the side of Mrs. Baldock, whoever her partner might be, for he had the highest opinion of her knowledge of the game, from the manner in which she had played since he had the honour of looking over her hand. “ Dear sir, you are vastly polite, I assure you I am seldom successful at cards, I shall, however, do my best to deserve your commendations,” was the reply of Mrs. Baldock, to what all but herself considered ill-judged praise ; for had it not been for the skill of her partner, and her holding honours repeatedly, the game must, from her

repeated blunders, inevitably have been lost.

Thus engaged was Sir Charles, when the Miss Mansells, their partners, and Miss Neville, as a relief from the heat of the dancing, took the tour of the other rooms, to pay their compliments to their elder acquaintance, and see what was passing. Montagu Neville, in the West Indies, knew Mrs. Baldock, who civilly recognised him as an acquaintance, inquiring after his sister, who, she supposed, was grown out of her remembrance. Constantia, from having heard Mrs. Baldock's character pretty freely canvassed some years before at her father's table, was not ill-pleased that an opportunity presented itself, for judging from personal observation, whether she merited the severe reprehension then bestowed upon her. She, therefore, took her seat on the side of Mrs. Baldock, resigning to her friend Eliza the attentions of Mr. Vander-

druzen, who had secured a place in a cotillion, a dance neither Miss Neville nor her brother were disposed to join in. Miss Mansell, who was ambitious of displaying to Sir Charles how little his desertion affected her, talked so loud, and smiled so benignantly at the witticisms of her partner, that Miss Neville was on the point of relinquishing her place, and joining a party seated near to Mr. and Mrs. Mansell, lest some of the card-players should in her hearing have expressed their disapprobation of such behaviour. The gentleman that had danced with this "Cynthia of the minute," felt that she had gone farther than was pleasing to her hearers, he, therefore, requested her to go up stairs, as he had been promised a place in the next cotillion, and he hoped she would honour him by continuing to be his partner.

Miss Mansell required not a second solicitation, her departure giving to the

whist-players a fair chance of displaying their proficiency in Hoyle.

Sometimes favoured with a few words from Mrs. Baldock, and occasionally addressed by her brother's male acquaintance, Constantia's mind was not so far occupied as to be wholly inattentive to the eagerness with which Montagu gazed on the pieces of painted pasteboard before him. Hurried away by propensities which he had hitherto as carefully concealed from his mercantile acquaintances, as he had thought it expedient to do from his sister, Montagu betted and doubled his stakes, like a veteran in the science of play. When a winner of twenty guineas, the losing party declined going on, and though flushed with success, the timid but reproving glance of his sister, gave to the heart of her brother a pang of self-reproach that obliged him to quit the room, lest the change in his countenance should be discovered.

“ If such are the uses to which my little fortune has been appropriated,” thought Constantia, “ how much more should I have consulted Montagu’s interest and my own, if I had suffered it to remain in the funds, instead of affording a temporary supply to extravagance, which cannot long be supported by honest means. The reports wafted to my father’s ear of the causes which led to the embarrassment of affairs in Barbadoes, were doubtless but too true.”

Lost thus in meditation, Miss Neville saw not the finesse of Sir Charles ; the gross compliments and sedulous attention which he paid to Mrs. Baldock, were not, however, unobserved by Captain Smith, who, after having repulsed her advances, for a greater part of the Bath season (at which place he became acquainted with her), had been endeavouring to reason himself into the possibility of sacrificing his native free-

dom, by leading her to the altar. Irresolute in his determinations, though for some time eager to break off the connection, he saw, with inward satisfaction, that he could now retract without making the lady his foe. Well acquainted with Sir Charles's desperate fortune, which, he was confident would make him strive to carry the citadel by a *coup-de-main*; he also knew the other party's predilection for the sound of *my lady*; and that though himself a younger man, by seven years, than the rival just started up (an advantage which the dowager did not fail to estimate at its true value); the coldness of the one contrasted with the ardour of the other, would soon lead her to decide in favour of the baronet, by which means he should be freed from engagements which he heartily despised himself for having entered into.

Mr. and Mrs. Mansell having now broke up their table, they summoned

Miss Neville to assist in collecting the young folks, judging it time to return home. Sir Charles, on hearing this, wished them a good night; as he had just taken a hand at cards, he hoped Miss Neville would excuse his not attending her to her carriage. The surprise of Mrs. Marsell at this rudeness, was withheld from utterance from a fear of the remarks of her husband, who, she knew, had been extremely averse to their receiving as a visitor a person so totally detached from their circle of acquaintance.

With little difficulty the party was assembled, and soon whirled home. Mr. Neville being, contrary to custom, the least communicative among the number; this change was perceptible to all, though, excepting his sister, none were able to assign the cause which produced it. From this evening, distrust of her brother pervaded the mind of Constantia; she performed

her duty towards him from principle, but she no longer considered her actions controulable by one so unfit to guide himself. These sentiments were, nevertheless, confined to her own breast ; nor could the person who excited them, have known, from any change in her manner, that her respect was diminished. He recollected her look at the card-table, and his conscience told him that had spoken more audibly the state of her feelings at the moment, than the most elaborate speech that could have been penned. Thus self-condemned, he yet pursued the course which his better sense should have taught him would end in disgrace.

To finish the history of the assembly, Sir Charles, in less than six weeks, made Mrs. Baldock Lady Lumley ; and she, to secure the acquiescence of Capt. Smith, voluntarily offered to purchase for him a majority in a regiment going abroad, to which liberal proposal

he most cordially assented, wishing his friend much joy on his marriage.

Lady Lumley's houses, in town and country, are, for elegance in decoration and profusion of costly furniture, the admiration of all who are admitted to view them; nor are there less attractions in her ladyship's entertainments, of which she is, during the winter, particularly liberal to her young friends, who anticipate the delights of Lady Lumley's balls with as much satisfaction as does the antique Lady-Directress of them, the copious details which decorate the columns of the fashionable papers, for some days after she has given one, and for the insertion of which details she liberally pays the editors. The baronet, meanwhile, has a settlement for life, most of which he prudently lays by for spending at Bath, or elsewhere, provided it is at a distance from his wife, to whom, when at home, he is tolerably civil; this he con-

trives to be as seldom as is consistent with his plan of giving her no real cause to complain of neglect, when, as he sarcastically observes to her, she considers the disparity of their years.

CHAP. XVIII.

I had a desire to hold my acquaintance with thee, or rather my knowledge, that I might say in the default, he is a man I know.

SHAKESPEARE.

OPPRESSED with a variety of cares, Miss Neville begged leave to shorten her visit in Chatham-place; the painful feelings awakened by the discovery of her brother's passion for play, gave to her countenance a cast of thought and perplexity, which in a great measure destroyed its natural expression. Not authorized by intimacy to seek to trace its source, Mrs. Mansell was aware that some hidden grief preyed upon the spirits of her visitor, and judging that, under such circumstances, the restraint imposed by being among strangers, must be more irk-

some than any advantage to be derived from their society could compensate for, she forbore to press her to remain, after she discovered an inclination to depart; Eliza was truly grieved to lose the society of her friend, for whom she had imbibed a lively affection. Miss Mansell, on the contrary, rejoiced at the prospect of being freed from the scrutinizing regards of a person, who, she was conscious, had condemned her conduct on more occasions than one, and whose rational way of thinking and acting, contrasted with her own flippancy and variableness of temper, had already deprived her of that ascendancy over the mind of her sister, which she had hitherto possessed.

The reports of the Baronet's devoirs to the widow being soon freely circulated, Miss Mansell was not a little humbled on reflecting, that but for her own assumption of his attentions to herself, he would have been considered by

her family, and the intimate acquaintances who had seen him of their party, as the visitor of Miss Neville, consequently she would not have endured any mortification at discovering that he had, like a true courtier, made use of the countenance and introduction of her father to get into society, by which it appeared he was determined to profit to the utmost. In grasping at the shadow, the fair *citoyenne* had lost the substance. Mr. Vanderdruzen, upon whom she had sometimes most graciously smiled, now paid her not the most common attentions; he had even ventured in her presence, to speak of the pleasures of Miss Neville's conversation, saying that he never had been in company with a young lady so well informed on every subject, while with all her superiority, she exacted no homage, and was ready to shew civility to every one, without considering whether in doing so, her consequence

would be either lessened or heightened.

This tacit censure of a contrary behaviour often practised by Miss Mansell, was a convincing proof that the young man had broken her chains, and his seeking to converse with Eliza, (who had profited by the admonitions of Miss Neville) in preference to her, gave a pang to the bosom of the elder sister, which she in vain sought to conceal from observation. Envious of the attainments of Miss Neville, it never occurred to Miss Mansell, that by industry and application she might have gained a portion of the same knowledge, that made the former a desirable companion, and gave to her character an energy which constituted her principal charm.

In returning to Hampstead, Constantia paid a visit to Somers, in whose hands she deposited the hundred pounds that remained of the stock sold out by

her brother. Most severely did this upright friend blame the pliability of temper which had led to such a sacrifice of independence; and still stronger were his expressions of disapprobation of the principles and the feelings of the person at whose instigation it was made. The fears of both parties, lest before the third payment became due, Montagu would have so far involved himself as to see no probability of settling in London as a man unincumbered with debt, were now communicated to each other; Somers at the same time warning his friend to consider her own interest, and to remember, that supplying the wants of a gamester, was like pouring oil upon fire. He was the more strenuous in giving this advice, because the person in whose service he was now engaged, had proposed that himself and family should remove to some miles' distance from town, where works were erecting for establishing

a manufactory which would require the constant care of a confidential person ; a house, rent and tax free, he stated as one of many privileges offered, to induce him to consent to a removal.

This news did not tend to raise the spirits of Miss Neville, who now found herself unexpectedly bereft of a protector on whom she had hitherto relied for support. In reflecting on the attachment of Somers to her family, she had felt for him a respect and tenderness which worth like his could alone have inspired.

Before she took her leave, he mentioned that Mr. Wetherall, a friend of her father, lately settled at Highgate, with whose family she had been on terms of intimacy in the life-time of her parents, had been making particular enquiries respecting the footing on which she lived with her brother. This gentleman said that he had called with his wife at Mr. Neville's house at Hamp-

stead, from a desire to shew civility to both brother and sister, but to the latter every mark of friendly regard; they therefore requested him to say that in her brother's absence, they hoped she would come to their house with the same freedom as to a relation's. This friendly intimation from an old West-India acquaintance, was received by Constantia, in her present state of dejection, with an uncommon degree of satisfaction, and while Somers suggested that Mr. Wetherall's counsel and opinion might be of real utility, she considered his removal into her neighbourhood at such a season of perplexity, as a fortunate circumstance.

The next morning after Miss Neville's return home, Miss Plimpton paid her a visit, in the hope of prevailing on her to pass some time with her in town, in order, as she said, that they might have a few pleasant evenings together,

to remind them of former times. This invitation was so strongly enforced by a letter from Mrs. Plimpton, that it required no little address to decline accepting it; but the resolution which Constantia had formed of not being seen in public, till she was more certain of the stability of her own situation, was not to be shaken by a more eloquent pleader than Miss Plimpton, who, to do her justice, exerted all her powers of persuasion, and was not a little mortified at their want of success.

Lady Darlington's carriage driving up at the moment that Miss Plimpton found she must desist, or be convicted of rudeness, she could not take her leave until her curiosity was gratified by witnessing the manner in which the parties received each other. The fertility of her invention having suggested that Miss Neville would not have quitted Mrs. Rochford's protection, to keep any brother's house,

who could not afford to dash off and live in style, unless some slight from one of the family had made her residence with them less pleasant than formerly. Here then Miss Plimpton was disappointed. The kind expressions of Lady Darlington and Mrs. Rochford, with the affectionate endearments of Georgiana, were even to the jaundiced eye of malevolence—striking proofs of undiminished regard and unalterable friendship. Miss Plimpton soon found herself at ease with Mrs. Rochford, to whom she talked with uncommon volubility of expression; touching on Brighton and its amusements, on purpose to introduce Mrs. Rochford's masquerade, which she avowed to have partaken of with no small degree of satisfaction and delight. But for Lady Darlington's assuming a reserved manner, Miss Plimpton would have been in no hurry to depart, this, however, she at last thought proper to

do, to the relief of Constantia, who feared Mrs. Rochford would tire of her loquacity, which, though entertaining at first, inspired disgust from an evident attempt to be witty, without possessing any pretensions but what were founded in ill-nature, and a desire to render others ridiculous at the expence of truth and candour.

Thus left to enjoy the society of those whom she had never ceased to regard, Constantia was under the necessity of partly declaring her motives for withdrawing from observation, and the necessity which induced her to keep much at home ; all which reasons appeared to Lady Darlington of sufficient validity to excuse her for the present from accepting invitations, even from those who in giving them, she was well assured, were influenced by a desire to render her happy, in bringing her forward to enjoy society and other recreations, of which, under her brother's roof, she

could not be supposed to have many opportunities of partaking. Relieved in a great measure from some unpleasant reflections by this unreserved communication with persons whose good opinion it was so much her interest as well as inclination to preserve, Miss Neville felt much of her accustomed cheerfulness in their presence, nor did their friendly attention fail to keep up her spirits, which but for such a fillip would have been very low.

In the society of Mr. and Mrs. Wetherall, Constantia passed many pleasant days. With them she was from various causes perfectly at ease, while she chose to keep her neighbours at a distance, lest the variableness of her brother's manner should excite suspicions, which it was so much her desire no person but herself should entertain; and most willingly would she have banished them from her own mind. Whenever Montagu, after staying a night from home,

wore a look of care and thoughtfulness, his sister conjectured he had spent greater part of the last twenty-four hours at the gaming-table. From a fear of betraying the state of her thoughts, she now scarcely asked a question respecting his engagements, and he, from mere indolence, spoke not of them, though frequently he had messages to deliver from Mrs. Mansell and other friends, who complained to him of her absence.

One day he came unexpectedly to dinner in great spirits, telling his sister almost as soon as he entered the room, that he had come down on purpose to shew her a letter received by that day's post, from their aunt Williamson, containing an invitation for them to spend the summer with her at Chesterfield, which, unless remittances from the West were more tardy than he had any reason to expect, he should certainly accept of; and if she pleased, he would

treat her with the jaunt, as it might be useful to her in future being on friendly terms with her own relations, who, however they might have disagreed with his father and mother, were always kind and affectionate to him.

On perusing the letter, Constantia saw no proof of attachment to her. As the only daughter of three sisters, she conceived she had a claim upon the affections of Mrs. Williamson, which would have been forcibly acknowledged, whenever she remembered that such a being existed, and that her unprotected situation had excited the sympathy of strangers.

Desirous of encouraging the cheerful communicativeness of her brother, to which she had of late been so little accustomed ; in returning the letter, Constantia did not express her own sentiments as to the cold style of the writer. She simply thanked him for his proposed offer of taking her to Derbyshire, an ex-

cursion which would, at all times, have been particularly pleasing merely as a gratification of curiosity; with him for a travelling companion, and the prospect of a welcome reception at Chesterfield, it must, on various accounts, be truly delightful.

More at ease than she had been for several weeks, in passing some hours with her brother, Miss Neville hoped to have an opportunity of conversing familiarly with him on his future prospects and present circumstances. This expectation was not long cherished, for before their meal was ended, he told her that one of their neighbours, who was a passenger in the stage coach, had invited both him and her to spend the evening with him and his family, and that he had undertaken to promise for both, trusting she would have no objection to fulfilling the engagement.

To avoid unnecessary repetitions, it is sufficient to observe, that Constantia

strove by every means in her power to render respectable the person whom she could not respect herself. Remittances enabling him to keep his engagements with his father's creditors, he now began to assume a consequence, and give entertainments at home, which obliged his sister to exert herself to the utmost, being unwilling to keep more servants than were absolutely necessary. The plate and linen belonging to her father, as well as the household furniture, and lease of the house, had been left by him to her, provided her mother did not live to return to England, but if she did, it was to be equally divided between them, unless it should be necessary to put up every article to sale for the benefit of the creditors of the estate. Somers having stated this circumstance to the gentlemen whose claims were largest, they, with a liberality that did honour both to their heads and hearts, on finding that there

would be fifteen shillings in the pound secured to them without touching this bequest, agreed to wave all claims upon the property of which it consisted, in consideration of Miss Neville, whose unwearied attention and filial tenderness many of them, in calling to see her father after his confinement, had observed with admiration, not unmixed with regret, that her prospects in life were so completely blighted by untoward events.

Till her brother had paid every fraction, according to the agreement subsisting between himself and the persons to whom her father was indebted, Constantia did not consider herself possessed of any property but the hundred pounds formerly mentioned. When the day of payment was past, Somers, as agent for Miss Neville, called upon Mr. Montagu Neville, requesting his acknowledgments for monies received by him in trust for her, of which no ac-

count had yet been rendered. This demand, though unexpected by the person on whom it was made, could not be considered improper, as in case of sudden death, to which Somers observed, young and old were equally liable, his sister would not, without such documents, be able to substantiate her claims on his property in England, and before it could be ascertained whether there were any reversion for her from the West Indies, she might starve, unless supported by the kindness of friends.

Well acquainted with every circumstance relating to the settlement of affairs, Somers made an inventory of all the plate, linen, and furniture, then in Mr. Neville's house, or deposited elsewhere, belonging to Miss Neville, which he required her brother to sign, stating, that such things were only lent to him, and could be removed at her pleasure ; this done, he calculated the amount of

the interest on all the money actually received by Mr. Neville, which, added to the principal, made the whole sum due by him to his sister, little short of a thousand pounds; interest at the rate of five per cent. on which sum Somers said Miss Neville had desired him to mention she wished to receive quarterly for her own expences.

With an affected generosity, Mr. Neville had on his first commencing housekeeping, desired his sister to make use of the sums he gave her to defray her private expences, as well as those in which he was concerned. But this Miss Neville had never done, she had kept regular entries of receipts and disbursements, giving him at the end of every month her housekeeping-book to examine; whether he did more than glance at the sum total she could not tell, nor would have bestowed a thought upon, but from his frequently complaining of the vast sums expended by her,

which it was impossible for her to lessen while he continued to give dinners, which he chose should consist of the delicacies of the season. On reflection, it occurred to her that he imagined he was supplying her purse, as well as supporting his own establishment; and as she had conscientiously never expended a shilling for herself, but what she took from her own stock, which was now exhausted, she thought this application for a quarterly stipend would convince him of the truth. Her agent in the business had, of his own accord, gone far beyond his instructions; and this, without communicating his intentions, well convinced that from motives of false delicacy, she would not have agreed to what was absolutely necessary to be done, in order to secure herself, in case of her brother's affairs falling into any person's hands to arrange excepting his own.

Little as the proud spirit of Montagu

could brook this interference of a man whom he considered so much his inferior; he avoided touching on the subject to his sister, who was not immediately apprized of the conference or its issue. Mr. Somers was always one day of the week at his master's house in Henrietta-street, where those who had business to transact were sure to find him; and there at a leisure hour he had by letter requested Miss Neville to call, that he might pay her the first quarter's interest, and shew her the receipts he had obtained, which he determined to keep, thinking them safer in his possession than her's.

Surprised at the precision that had marked the transactions, Miss Neville was fearful that her brother would bear some resentment towards her, for having entrusted to another what might have been settled between themselves, unless a doubt of his honour had been entertained either by herself or friend.

Somers reasoned her out of this apprehension, by declaring, that the steps he had taken, every commercial man must know to be proper; and he doubted not that Mr. Neville's good sense would lead him to judge of them accordingly. The service rendered to Miss Neville by Somers, on this occasion, was indeed of inestimable value. The complaints made by her brother of the profuse expenditure in his house, she concluded, were uttered with a view to induce her to relinquish presiding as its mistress; for from the dissolute manners of some of his new acquaintance, she doubted not that her presence was a restraint upon his and their pleasures. If she had not been guilty of injustice in imputing to him such an intention, he would scarcely be the less desirous of retaining her, because he discovered how much of his own splendid appearance at table was obtained by the display of her property.

On the contrary, should he have spoken without reflection, she trusted that this settlement of pecuniary transactions would induce him to look into her accounts, when he must discover what were the expensive articles, and judge where the work of retrenchment, of which he had urged the necessity, was to begin.

From her never having considered a residence in her brother's house a permanent one, Constantia would have endured no mortification or disappointment, if he had in unequivocal language said that he no longer wished her to continue in it. The want of that confidence and easy communication which had ever subsisted between her father and herself, hurt her feelings much more than a separation would have done. Now assured of a small independence, she could have resolved to live within the limits of her income, though that must have consigned her to

a more moderate sphere than any in which she had hitherto moved. Excepting Eliza Mansell, she had no companion whom she could receive with pleasure. To her, she could without ceremony declare whether it suited to ask her to pass the day, or if preparations for company, invited by her brother, would so far engross her attention that she must deprive herself of the pleasure she would otherwise have enjoyed in her society. Montagu himself had given up visiting at Mr. Mansell's, or any where else that his sister did, consequently she could not invite any of the families to his house, or join any of the evening parties that he had once been instrumental in promoting, without assigning some reason for his absence.

Mr. Wetherall, who knew much better than she did the connections that had fascinated her brother, frequently prevailed on her to dine with his family

at Highgate, where she remained till next morning, and as his house was not the resort of company, she enjoyed the domestic pleasures of a family circle, without being exposed to the enquiries of the curious, who were earnest to learn what the pursuits of Mr. Neville were, since he had given up visiting his neighbours. The most favourable construction put on this change of conduct, was, that the gentleman was paying his court to some fair lady, to whom he devoted all his leisure hours ; to discover the object who thus kept him so completely to herself, was, however, beyond the skill of the belles of Hampstead, with whom Montagu had been an universal favourite, and not without reason, for he was equally attentive to all who admitted him to their good graces, in the hope of winning his heart. Had he been as invulnerable to the shafts directed by the meretricious fair, with whom his purse had

more attractions than his person, it would have been most fortunate for his own happiness, and the peace of his sister. At the time when he should have performed his promise in taking her to Derbyshire, one of these artful syrens had such an ascendancy, that she prevailed on him to accompany her on an excursion to another part of the country, while to his sister and aunt he stated, that indispensable business obliged him to postpone to another year, a journey which he had fully resolved to undertake, from a desire to bring together two persons, who he was certain would derive mutual pleasure from his introduction.

Each party believed him to be sincere, lamenting his inability to fulfil his good intentions ; and though *a good natured* acquaintance did endeavour to hint to Miss Neville the true cause of her disappointment, so little could she comprehend the possibility of her bro-

ther's committing so flagrant a violation of decency, that she believed the person who started the subject, merely meant to insinuate that the attractions of beauty, rather than the engagements of business, had led him to the west, instead of the north of England, where there existed no claims upon his attention but those of duty, which were easily parried when inclination took another direction. Wishing to see her brother well married, this intelligence was most pleasing to Constantia, who, until she found that her intended sister-in-law did not deserve her friendship, felt disposed to tender it to whoever her brother thought worthy of bearing his name. That he had no view of marrying, she was soon convinced of, but most heartily did she despise the person who, forgetting female delicacy, in explicit terms named the *fashionable impure*, whom it was publicly said her brother supported.

Miss Plimpton, in communicating this scandal, as she would have done any other news of the day, to one so deeply interested in ascertaining its truth or falsity, thought not of the effect which the report would have in banishing her from the society of the person whose peace she had thus wantonly wounded. Constantia had never regarded Miss Plimpton sufficiently to feel it incumbent on her to declare that she must decline her acquaintance, though she fully resolved that this should be the last time that any house which she inhabited, should be open to receive so malignant a character as she had now reason to believe the busy informant was.

In tracing the events of her past life, Constantia observed on how many occasions her pleasures had been converted into sorrows, by listening to the artful tales of this lady. Little as she appeared to feel the desertion of Mr.

Hamilton, when she believed him governed by caprice, his affectionate attention to her father, and respectful manner to herself when under the pressure of misfortune, had strengthened the good opinion which she had originally entertained of him, and sincerely did she at that season rejoice that no imputation upon his honour had ever escaped her lips, though this delectable lady and others, by railing at the inconsistency of his conduct, had endeavoured to provoke her to echo their expressions. As the characters and principles of other of her male acquaintance were exposed to her observation, Miss Neville saw more reason to esteem those of Mr. Hamilton, who, though from various causes, seldom thrown into the same society with herself, she never met without recollecting his friendly behaviour to an affectionate much regretted parent, in preference to retaining any remembrance

of the apparent injustice with which he had in days of youthful gaiety and prosperity treated her.

The uniform politeness and ease of manners which distinguished Miss Neville in company, gave none of the other sex room to hope that she had a preference for the conversation of any, excepting what might be supposed to arise from the superior intelligence and mental acquirements of the person seeking to make himself agreeable. The being disappointed in two instances, as to the nature of the attachment, when she believed herself quite certain on both occasions, gave her an indifference for mankind, rather inconsistent with the warmth of her heart and its natural susceptibility of tender impressions. Mr. Hamilton, who for years seemed only to exist in her presence, and eagerly to seize every opportunity of paying her the most delicate attentions, subsiding into the dis-

tant but interested friend, was a phenomenon it was true, but not so destructive in its consequences, or by its appearance producing so instantaneous a change in her own sentiments, as the transformation of Rochford from the zealous affectionate friend into the passionate sensual lover.

To live independent of all enjoyments not actually in her possession, was the ruling principle by which Miss Neville was actuated, in looking with a discriminating eye into the domestic circles to which she had access, she saw that the picture of conjugal felicity sketched by the fervid imagination of youth, was seldom realized; her observations on the causes which led to matrimonial infelicity, obliged her to confess that both parties were generally to blame; the women sometimes losing their influence from inattention to trifles, which, notwithstanding, were essential to the preservation of affection. In granting

this, she was equally sensible that the cold neglect of some men who were termed very good husbands, was most difficult to be borne. Determined as she was, to endeavour to contribute to the comfort and happiness of those with whom she might be connected, she had not the presumption to suppose that other women were not governed by the same desire; she did not therefore imagine that she was to be more fortunate than they were, though she resolved not to enter with precipitation into any engagements, with a view to avert impending evil, and to distrust the decisions of the heart, unless those of the head were, on an impartial appeal, found to accord with them.

These reflections arose in the mind of Miss Neville, on her finding that the society of Captain Conolly was more pleasing to her than that of any of the gentlemen who formed the parties at her brother's table; an accidental disco-

very of his contempt for religion, added to some freedoms, which in a moment of inebriety he had ventured to take, awakened those guards which ought ever to be on the watch to defend the citadel. Certain that he felt no ordinary liking for her person, she doubted not that a knowledge of her brother's proceedings, and a supposition that she was wholly dependent on him for support, might have led him to conclude, that at no distant period his protection might be offered and accepted, on conditions not quite so severe as those imposed by the law of marriage. "Thus," said Constantia, "am I deceived in listening to persons whom I judge to be sincerely attached to me, because they seek to interest my feelings, and to make their conversation as acceptable to me, as it is evident mine is to them. The dark designing Rochford, and the apparently open, inconsiderate, but liberal Conolly, have the

same end in view, that of self-gratification—the happiness of the beloved object having but a secondary place in their thoughts, each seeking to justify the enormity of their actions, by affecting to disregard institutions which condemn such conduct, and to laud the liberality of those who paint vice arrayed in the garb of virtue, and assert that morality is a surer pilot than religion.—Such, I am convinced, are the sentiments of Conolly, though the check he has received from me, deters him from expressing them. But for the virtuous, well-principled Somers, I should believe that in my father's grave I buried every disinterested male friend; and, little as I am prone to suspicion, I begin to fear that characters like theirs are much oftener to be met with than I have hitherto imagined.”

CHAP. XIX.

It is certain that wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught, as men take diseases one of another, therefore let men take heed of their company.

SHAKESPEARE.

INFATUATED as Montagu Neville was, there were seasons when the “small still voice of conscience” would be heard, when he execrated his own folly, and determined to abandon a course of life which he despised himself for having ever adopted. The remnant of honour which he still retained, kept him from seeking to raise money by fraud to support the extravagance of his mistress; her influence was great, but her knowledge of his character prevented her from instigating him to the perpetration of any deed which was

likely to excite suspicions of her own honesty.

When he declared to the unprincipled woman who had been the chief cause of his ruin, that he must fly from London, for he could not endure the reproaches which he was certain of meeting from all who had given him credit, she answered with the most unmoved countenance, that she hoped he did not mean to acquaint her with his place of concealment; for she doubted not that on his disappearing, many enquiries would be made at her house respecting him, and the surest way to prevent her communicating any intelligence, and to avoid being suspected of it, was to put it out of her power to give any.

Scarcely believing the evidence of his own senses, the half-frantic Montagu exclaimed, "Am I awake, or is this a delusion of the imagination? Yet surely this is the apartment of her

who was *my* Laura, and for whom I have sacrificed my fame, my fortune, and above all, my amiable sister. Constantia, thou wilt be avenged; this wretch, now triumphing in the spoils of what should have been thine, thou wilt most likely see reduced to so deplorable a condition as even to excite thy compassion." At these words he darted out of the house, though he had entered it with a view to ask the loan of twenty guineas, to enable him to get out of town. Much as he had known of the mercenary disposition of Laura, he had ever believed her attached to himself, rather than to his fortune; and though, on many occasions since his affairs had become embarrassed, he had found less warmth in her manner than formerly, he imputed the difference to a variety of causes, rather than to the most natural one, that she was desirous of shaking off a person whose finances were known to be in a declining state,

and whose gloomy fits made him not the most desirable companion for one, who, unable to bear her own reflections, was most unfit to soothe the sorrows of another; her only chance for preserving that artificial flow of spirits which the vitiated taste of her admirers thought her chief attraction, was, by the frequent use of cordials, and a determination to banish from her presence every person incapable of contributing to her pleasures.

The first part of Laura's life resembles so much that of many courtezans who have of late years obtruded their *memoirs* and *apologies* upon the public, that it is unnecessary to sacrifice my own time or to request the attention of my readers to a detail so little calculated to amend the heart or improve the morals. This lady has been glanced at before in the history of Miss Neville, though not named. She it was who rode in state in Hyde Park in the *vis-a-vis*

of Sir Harry Dash'em. After some changes she became the mistress of Neville; and possibly her progress may be traced to a situation less splendid than that in Boulton-row, from whence she issued to drive her phaeton and ponies before the noble mansions, where resided the hapless mates of many a peer and commoner whom she had fleeced.

So celebrated had the fame of this lady become, that a principal part of her income was derived from a wealthy Israelite resident at Amsterdam, whose acquaintance with her was wholly from report, and the contemplation of her picture. It was one of his boasts, that in London, Paris, and Vienna, there should be residing a mistress of his, whose charms were universally acknowledged; and by this extraordinary means was Laura enabled to support an equipage, consisting of a carriage and four, with two outriders, which,

shameful to relate, were sometimes lent to a brother, who, by changing the dress of the servants, and using another carriage, hoped to make them pass for his own; but the deception was soon discovered, and thus was it recorded, that an officer bearing his Majesty's commission publicly enjoyed luxuries procured by the wages of his sister's infamy. Had not this man been contaminated by the company he met at the gaming-table, his sensibilities would not have been so far blunted as to allow him to submit to a degradation altogether unworthy of the honourable profession to which he belonged.

Montagu feared that in less than eight and forty hours his credit would be blasted; and if on the spot, he expected shortly to be called upon to account for vast sums expended in a manner which he felt thoroughly ashamed of, and durst not acknowledge. He had engaged with some other needy

men in raising money upon bills, where there was no real property to answer them. While the credit of the drawers, acceptors, and indorsers, was unimpeached, this artificial money served many purposes; one of the houses concerned in this business (which, though not denominated swindling by the laws of the land, is surely a species of it in the laws of equity) having had a tumble, and there being nearly due bills to a considerable amount accepted by them, and indorsed by Montagu, which it was not in his power to take up, he saw no alternative but flight or a gaol; for he was well convinced, that his extravagance and dissolute life would so exasperate all concerned, that though a statute of bankruptcy should be issued, a certificate would never be granted him; and, consequently, after enduring the buffetings of those whom he had injured, he would still be as much in their power as if he had never surren-

dered his property, or gone through the forms prescribed by law. To borrow money from any person to whom he could not confide the little probability there existed of his being ever able to repay it, was impossible; and as difficult was it to determine on communicating to any of his intimates the actual state of his affairs, and the necessity by which he was governed.

The greater part of the plate belonging to his sister had never been removed from the banker's hands in which, on the death of Mr. Neville, it had been deposited; they conceived it as much the property of one child as the other, and that they were equally amenable to Mr. Montagu for their care of the trust as to his sister; on commencing housekeeping, he had taken some shewy articles of little intrinsic value out of the chest for present use, saying, that while he lived out of town, he was fearful of having much plate about him,

lest from his frequent absence some persons might be tempted to break into the house and alarm his sister. When driven to desperation therefore, he saw no means of raising money but by pledging some of his sister's property. He found no difficulty in getting access to the chest, and in conveying away from Lombard-street, in a hackney coach, some large waiters and other massy articles, which, from their antique make, were only fit for the melting-pot.

On these he got a sufficient sum for present use; hastily collecting his clothes, commonly left at his apartment in Broad-street, (where the 'compting-house was situated) and telling the old woman who had the care of it, that he was going off on special business to Bristol, he took a hackney coach, and ordered the man to drive to the Gloucester coffee-house, Piccadilly, where he expected to overtake the mail. As if sud-

denly changing his mind, he drew the check-string, in Cheapside, saying, he should be in time for the coaches before they set out from Lad-lane. The coachman set down his fare, with his portmanteau, at the door of the inn, and Neville instantly stepped into the Liverpool coach, having two hours before paid for his place as far as Leicester. Wrapped up in a horseman's great coat, with his hat flapped over his eyes, Montagu trusted to escape unknown; and though he suffered inexpressible torture while he recognized the voices of many of his acquaintances during the time that the coaches remained at the post office, he kept himself so much screened from observation, that he got out of London undiscovered.

His object in taking this road was to see his aunt at Chesterfield, to whose care and protection he meant to commend his sister, and from whom he also hoped to receive some pecuniary

aid. He knew that at Lancaster there were vessels ready to sail for the Leeward Islands; and he imagined that in a place where his person was not known, he might remain for a few days unmolested, should the want of a fair wind detain the shipping so long in port.

His journey was propitious, and his meeting with his aunt peculiarly so. He however found, on conversing with her, that he must not declare that it was his creditors whom he was desirous of shunning; she openly expressed her contempt for trade, and how much she regretted that he had not embraced a learned profession in preference to commerce. While she said this, she added, that had her brother-in-law's name appeared in the Gazette, she never should have acknowledged one of his family. He therefore said, that an affair of honour obliged him to retire from the world for a little time, and his motions had been

so precipitate, that he had omitted to bring a sum of money adequate to his maintenance, neither was he able to repair his fault by drawing for a supply, as his friends believed him to have taken the Dover road, and to be at that time on the other side of the channel, though his intention was to proceed to Scotland, from whence he should write to his sister enjoining her secrecy, and requesting her to apprise him when the state of his affairs in London would admit of his return to it.

Mrs. Williamson believed her nephew to be fraught with truth and honour; she therefore presented him with a bank note of fifty pounds, and desired him to acquaint his sister that she should at all times be happy to receive her under her roof, though she feared that after residing so many years in the midst of amusement and gaiety, a small retired place like Chesterfield would appear very dull. Montagu,

eager to be gone, was not sorry that an expectation of company to visit his aunt, and contradict her assertion as to her recluse mode of life, prevented her from soliciting his stay. By cross roads he reached Lancaster just in time to secure his passage, and purchase a sufficient stock of linen for the voyage; a letter which he had left at the 'compting-house, addressed to his clerk, declaring that he was gone to Bristol, in the hope of securing a debt long considered doubtful, and which he had been that moment informed would, without his presence, be lost, in some degree accounted for his sudden departure.

It was one of those singular occurrences which sometimes happen to commercial men, that had Mr. Neville not been smitten by the horrors of a guilty conscience, but nobly encountered his difficulties in person, profuse as he had been, there would have been little

doubt of his affairs being arranged to his satisfaction; for the mail which arrived from Jamaica the day after he left London brought good bills to a considerable amount, obtained in recovery of some of Bellmour's debts, which had been put into the hands of the attorney employed by Mrs. Neville, to whom her nephew had given them on her arrival in the island, saying, that her agent might perhaps sue to more advantage than he could. The bills which he expected to be obliged to take up, or forfeit his credit, were indiscriminately called in, the house principally concerned in circulating them having issued paper to a great amount, some of which bills were supposed to be in the hands of people who had never given a shilling value for them, but expected to defraud the indorsers by having recourse to them on the failure of the acceptors. The vigilance of some persons whose property was at

stake, laid open a species of fraud hitherto either unknown or undetected; and thus was Mr. Neville freed from responsibility, and supplied with cash to make good other payments, at the moment when, urged by despair, and a consciousness that his proceedings would not bear investigation, he was abandoning all that he should have held sacred, seeking, in a change of scene, relief from his own reflections, which for many months had been a burthen almost too grievous to be borne.

On the wide ocean he experienced the same pangs that had embittered his life in England; the incertitude under which he laboured respecting the safety and health of his sister, added poignancy to his sorrows; more than once he felt inclined to take a leap that would have ended his mortal career. The remembrance of his mother's last hour then smote him; he recollected how she had borne affliction, particularly

that loss, which to her was a stroke infinitely more difficult to sustain with fortitude than any that had been inflicted on him. He began to examine his own heart, and sought to become acquainted with himself. He found that religion was something more than a dream, that virtue was no phantom, and that the friendship of the wicked was more to be dreaded than their enmity. "Alas!" would he exclaim, "why did I not court solitude before? Why did I run from one scene of folly and dissipation to another, instead of seeking my own happiness in the society of my sister? Ill-fated Constantia! how my heart bleeds when I think of the anguish that will assail thine, on discovering thy brother to be so unworthy of thy esteem and regard! What distresses may not environ thee in my absence! The generosity and openness of thy nature has involved thy little property in my ruin. That I may live to repair my

errors, and prove that I am not wholly devoid of fraternal affection, is my fervent hope. Perhaps the laudableness of my present undertakings, and the resolutions I have formed to relinquish pernicious habits, an indulgence in which have led to my present disgrace, may appease the anger of the Deity, and I may have the power of proving, by deeds rather than words, that I am worthy of such a sister."

In this frame of mind was Neville when he arrived at Madeira. Here he remembered that he had lent Captain Conolly twenty-five pounds a few days before he set out for Ireland, who, on purchasing a ship in the river for the East India trade, had been obliged to draw so largely on his agents, that he could not, without lowering his consequence (of which he was very tenacious), ask for any farther supply; and as he had often been in the habit of lending his friend Neville a hundred or

two, he with little reluctance applied to him for so small a sum, giving him a draught on his agents, payable in two months, which he desired might not be presented for acceptance till within ten days of its being due. From this place he wrote to his sister, inclosing this draft as payment for her half-year's interest then due, and which at the last quarter he had requested her to postpone, being then hard run for cash. In this letter he merely said that he was going to Barbadoes, as he found that unless some interested person was on the spot, nothing effectual was to be expected from old debts; that but for his success in his own concerns, he would never have been able to pay off the demands on his father's estate; he hoped, that by going unexpectedly, he should get possession of some of the next crops, and by the July fleet send home what would make all parties easy. In apologizing for his reserve to her, he

assured her his determination was so suddenly formed, that it was impossible to go out to Hampstead, and that even had his clerk known of his intentions, they might not have been so effectually concealed as the exigency of affairs demanded; for he was well convinced that some persons, to whom he was largely indebted, would have taken measures to prevent his leaving the kingdom, while the plan he had adopted would, he was certain, give to all a fairer chance of being paid than had he staid in England. If it became necessary to consult a lawyer, he advised her to have recourse to Messrs. Lambton and Dornford, of St. Helen's. The elder partner and his wife they had often met at Mr. Mansell's; she would, therefore, have less difficulty in communicating what was requisite to Mr. Lambton, than to any other person, as she had found that gentleman's friendly manner particularly pleasing, and he

had, even as a stranger, expressed himself much interested in her favour; indeed, her brother said, but for his own perplexities, the acquaintance would have been cemented into friendship, by an intercourse between the families, which, contrary to his inclinations, he had been compelled to decline.

Not knowing into whose hands this letter might fall, Montagu avoided touching on any subject which might lead to criminate himself; and, though eager to confess his errors to the private ear of his sister, he was not yet so far humbled as to give to others a testimony under his own hand of weakness and imprudence, which possibly might, without such confession, be concealed from their knowledge. So desirous are the weak and frail of preserving reputation, though they hesitate not to commit actions in secret, which, if blazoned abroad, would at once de-

prive them of that rank in society, without which their existence would scarcely be worth holding. Few there are in the middle ranks of life so depraved, as not to feel anxious for a good name; would they strive with equal zeal to act virtuously, as they do to ensure approbation for possessing the semblance of truth and honour, how much more would they consult their own happiness, and promote the welfare of the community of which they are members!

It is, however, time to return to our heroine, whom we left at the conclusion of the last chapter, moralizing on the selfishness of man. The absence of her brother, and the ambiguity of his proceedings, gave her no cause to change her opinion respecting the motives by which the sex appeared to be governed. A short letter written on board ship, and entrusted to the care of the pilot, addressed to the clerk, stating

that he was bound for Barbadoes, and hoped soon to give a good account of his voyage, as well as of the people who kept back from paying money so long due, and which he was informed they wanted inclination more than ability for remitting, relieved her in some degree from the fears which she entertained for his safety; but by no means informed her what steps she ought to take for the future disposal of herself. Kept bare of supplies for six months, the money offered her by the clerk on her brother's account, went a very little way in discharging tradesmen's bills, while all who heard that Mr. Neville had left England were eager in presenting their accounts, fearing that they would come off but badly if they were not strenuous in asserting their claims. Contrary to the advice and wishes of Somers, she drew the hundred pounds out of his hands, for the purpose of clearing off all scores with the land-

lord, &c. Discharging at the same time one servant, she left to the clerk to satisfy the demands of her brother's man-servant, who only attended in the country when his master was there, consequently she never considered herself as his mistress. Retrenching in every article, she determined to live as frugally as possible ; and, finding very little left of her hundred pounds, was under the necessity of taking credit from her Hampstead trades-people, who, she perceived with some surprise, drew out their weekly bills in her name, instead of her brother's.

Excepting Mr. Wetherall's family, Constantia had little or no society. Mr. Mansell, to please his wife and daughters, by taking them to a watering-place, had given up his house at Hampstead ; and as she was scarcely ever from home, there was little chance of their meeting. From Eliza she sometimes heard, and was pleased to per-

ceive by her style of writing that she was happy, and likely, with the approbation of all parties (excepting her sister), to become Mrs. Vanderdrusen. Mr. Wetherall, who heard of the bills in which Montagu had been concerned, was well assured that he dreaded being implicated in the odium that was brought on the drawers, or he never would have left the kingdom; many besides him were of the same opinion; and, ultimately, the failure of Neville was entirely to be imputed to his having lent his name and credit to persons who made the basest use of them; and from his not being present to defend himself, their allegations were believed, and his property became liable to the same extent as theirs.

Leading a life which bore a greater affinity to a state of vegetation than to any resemblance of former times, Miss Neville was awakened from the stupor

into which she was plunged, by the receipt of a letter from Captain Conolly, couched in the most friendly terms, saying, that as her brother had taken French leave, he hoped she would on any emergency apply to him, through his agents Messrs. C. and D. of Serjeant's-Inn, who would forward whatever letters, addressed to him, were left at their office ; he should be happy on this occasion to become his friend Montagu's banker, who had often helped him out of a scrape, and, he was sure, would thank him more sincerely for any services rendered to his sister, than those of treble value, which he might have the power of offering to himself. He concluded, therefore, with intreating his fair friend to use no ceremony in commanding his assistance in any way that would be instrumental to her interest ; on his return to England, he hoped to find her in good health and spirits, to be assured of her enjoying

which blessings would always contribute to his happiness, for he was sincerely her friend, &c.

The honest-hearted sailor shone so much through the plain diction of this epistle, that, little as Constantia intended to avail herself of the friendship of the writer, she could not help feeling obliged by his remembrance, while she rejoiced that she had received such a proof of gratitude to a falling friend, to counterbalance the inattention of many, to whom she well knew her brother's purse and table had been open, when his tradesmen's bills had gone unpaid, and he had withheld from her the slender stipend, which was all she could command, to defray expences that she endeavoured to make as moderate as was consistent with propriety. One of her fears, on knowing that her brother's desertion of her was made public, arose from an apprehension that this would be a signal for Rochford to

intrude upon her privacy, with a view of tendering pecuniary assistance under the guise of friendship, according to the tenor of his conversation at the Opera, which indicated that he had relinquished all hope of subduing her resentment, but by keeping within the limits she should herself prescribe. The declining state of Lady Darlington's health had obliged her to winter at Bath, where Mrs. Rochford thought it necessary to accompany her ; for, since Miss Neville's departure, her mother had been her chief confidant and friend, both of them finding satisfaction in the society of each other.

Mr. Rochford, thus left to himself, found leisure for pursuing the plan of life most agreeable to his taste ; the society he chose to assemble in his own house, had not for some time been exactly that which his father-in-law would have wished him to select ; of him, however, he had become too indepen-

dent to care whether his conduct pleased or displeased. A declared enemy to Ministry, and a favourer of all the disaffected spirits who could excite his attention by the novelty of their doctrines, how did this developement of Rochford's principles mortify Lord Darlington! Too late did he discover how much he had erred in believing, that riches and honours were the only objects worth the possessing. In old age, he learnt the futility of those things which he had been more than half a century striving to obtain. Mr. Rochford, thus absorbed by projects for reforming the errors of the constitution, and pointing out in what instances the laws were defective, seldom recollected *Constantia*; nor would he, to preserve her from impending evil, have subjected himself to the smallest inconvenience. The disappearance of Montagu, in consequence of his being implicated in the concerns of the house already men-

tioned, was talked of by some among his associates as a matter of course ; for what right had a citizen to ape the vices of his superiors ? Rochford, indeed, had a gleam of satisfaction at hearing of Neville's misfortunes, which, he was sure, must involve his sister, whose cursed disdain he had never either forgotten or forgiven, and whom he exulted in the thought of beholding without resources in some exposed situation, where he would have an opportunity of humbling the virtue which he could not conquer.

Such were the sentiments of a modern *philosophist*, who prided himself on being an *illuminé*, and a propagator of those doctrines which were to enlighten Europe, and to free all mankind from the shackles of superstition under which they had for so many ages groaned. The man who could not govern the little kingdom within, who was the slave of passion, and the dupe

of those of superior talents, who by the most servile flatteries found the road to his purse, this self-elected tribune would have descanted to his little audience on the beauty of virtue, the competency of the creature for prescribing limits to the powers of the Creator, with all the trite and hacknied objections to revealed religion, which may be culled from the writings of modern infidels, with an air of such candour and urbanity, as might have deceived all who knew not his private character, and how very necessary it was that he should first take the beam out of his own eye, before he pretended to shew to his brethren the mote that he had discovered in their's.

From this statement of Rochford's avocations and pursuits, it will appear that Miss Neville was not likely to have her retirement invaded by any offer of friendship or kindness from him. Her brother's letter from Madeira, though

not so satisfactory as she could have wished, was yet consolatory, as it proved that her welfare and accommodation were the subject of his meditations, at a time when his own distresses and disappointments might have been supposed to occupy his whole attention. The bill of Captain Conolly she would willingly not have presented, from a fear of renewing an acquaintance which she thought, under her present circumstances, could be no acquisition. As, however, his letter from Ireland proved that he was no stranger to the perplexities under which she laboured, and the money would be a most seasonable relief, she determined on going to Somers in Henrietta-street, in order that he might present the bill for acceptance, and receive the proceeds when due. This faithful friend, guessing the state of her finances, offered her five pounds, which he would

deduct from the bill; and when accepted, if the whole amount would relieve her from her difficulty, he would with pleasure advance it. While he said this, he recommended her immediate application to Messrs. Lambton and Dornford, as he saw no possibility of her getting any security for her property without having recourse to law, all the creditors believing the furniture, plate, &c. of the house at Hampstead to be her brother's, and that she was now supported in it by their money; for as Montagu was indebted in double the amount of what was owing to him, every shilling she received from the clerk to defray her housekeeping, they considered as taken from themselves.

Pained to the soul at hearing that her conduct admitted of a construction so opposite to truth, and which, if credited, must lower her in the estimation of her friends; Constantia, in accept-

ing the five pounds, assured Mr. Somers, that as soon as he transmitted to her the papers which her brother had signed at his request, she would make a point of seeing Mr. Lambton, and of requesting his direction, as to quitting her brother's house, which had become to her a most dreary residence, and would be still more so from the communications she had that day received. Rejoicing, as she went along, that she should have the power of comforting some whose hard-earned pittance had been too long withheld ; so rigid was the economy practised by herself, that though not a little fatigued with walking in town, the afternoon being uncommonly serene, she returned home on foot, to save the trifle which a passage in the stage would have cost.

Fatigue of body conquered anxiety of mind, and procured to the innocent Constantia those peaceful slumbers

which seldom visit the pillow of the selfish and indolent. In imagination, she was again blest with the protection of her parents. She listened to the endearing counsels of her father, and tried to embrace her mother. On this attempt she perceived that their forms were unreal, that their countenances were animated with a celestial brightness, and, while they pointed to their own blissful abodes, indicated that as yet she could not enter them. Awakening from her dream, she arose with more than usual alacrity, shedding tears at the recollection of former happiness such as she never again expected to taste. In tracing the visions of the night, she was soothed and cheered by the hope springing in her bosom, that those who were so dear to her when on earth, were now witnesses of her conduct, and secretly animating her to

persevere in the performance of her duty.

Let the unbeliever scoff at such visionary sources of consolation ; let him despise, as weak and futile, those resolutions which are confirmed and strengthened by such means. Let him learn from the voice of experience, that a parent can bequeath to his offspring no portion so valuable as an unblemished reputation, and an example of active virtue which he has made it their glory to emulate. When bending under the weight of reiterated disappointment, this supports their drooping spirits, and preserves them from those deviations from rectitude, to which their necessities might impel them, but for the hope they entertain of proving themselves worthy members of a family who can neither be disgraced by poverty, nor ennobled by vice ; their

patent of distinction flowing from a source to which the titled plunderer would in vain apply for an accession of honours, though he would willingly relinquish half his ill-gotten wealth could he possess a portion of that “ peace which goodness bosoms ever.”

CHAP. XX.

Make not that my fault,
Which you in justice must ascribe to fortune.

MASSINGER.

THE punctual Somers, fearful of trusting papers of such importance to the hands of a third person, walked out to Hampstead himself the following afternoon, that he might deliver them to Miss Neville, and acquaint her with the fate of Captain Conolly's bill, which his agents had declined to accept without advice, though they desired him to call previous to its being due, as they doubted not in the interim to receive his orders respecting its payment; they added, that not having heard from him for some weeks, it was indeed highly probable that he might be in London before the time expired.

This unexpected delay made Constancia almost regret her precipitate disposal of the bank note, which was now reduced to a solitary half-guinea. Assuring Somers of her grateful thanks for his zeal in her service, she also promised to go to St. Helen's at a very early hour the next morning.

To town, then, she once more bent her steps. Arriving at chambers before eleven, she was much mortified to find that Mr. Dornford, the partner, whom she scarcely knew, was there to receive her, instead of her friend, to whom alone she could have communicated the nature of her business. Mr. Dornford, perceiving her disappointment, had the good nature to inform her, that Mr. Lambton was at a friend's house, where, if she chose, she could call upon him, to fix an early day for consulting with him on her affairs; as, without their meeting, many letters might pass before this point could be

accomplished. Though grateful for this permission, Constantia felt some little repugnance at calling upon a gentleman at the house of a person unknown to her; she, however, considered that the necessity which governed her proceedings at this time, was of too imperious a nature to admit of yielding to punctilio. Getting the direction from Mr. Dornford, therefore, she stepped into the first hackney coach she saw, judging that Mr. Lambton would have the politeness to come out to her on sending in her card.

On her arrival in Bedford-row, she followed this mode of proceeding, recollecting, while she waited at the door of the great, the remark which she had once heard made, while dining with Mr. and Mrs. Lambton at the house of Mr. Mansell, by a lady then present, on Mr. Lambton's being called upon in like manner, and Mrs. Mansell being desirous of shewing proper respect to

his visitor, " You need not distress yourself ; I dare say she will consider the little dressing-room a very comfortable place to wait in ; she must be a person of no consequence by her coming in a hackney coach without a servant." The different young female figures, whose countenances she saw appearing through the blinds of the front parlour, she doubted not were passing strictures of the same kind upon her ; and, as she recollected some of them as having been frequenters of the assemblies which she had attended, thought it not unlikely that the expression of her features would also be recognised by them.

Mr. Lambton's opening the coach door, and requesting her to alight, drew her attention to subjects of more importance. He kindly complied with her desire of stepping into the vehicle ; and, with as great consideration, when he found the nature of her business,

requested her to take a family dinner with himself and Mrs. Lambton at Clapton the following Friday, when, if she would put her night-cap in her pocket, they could have a comfortable evening's chat, and discuss all points relative to her present situation. This proposal having been acceded to, Constantia drove into Holborn, where she discharged her coach, and returned to Hampstead, in some degree reassured by the interest which in their short interview Mr. Lambton had appeared to take in her concerns. So exhilarating to the sensible mind is the voice of sympathy in the hour of distress. When real benevolence has been implanted in the human breast, where it has not been stifled by avarice, or its current checked by the chilling blasts of poverty, no intercourse with the unfeeling will totally eradicate it ; else, would this man, bred to the profession of the law from the time of completing his education, and

after thirty years' practice as an attorney in London and its environs, have retained so much of the milk of human kindness, as to pour consolation into the bosom of a depressed individual, from whom he could expect to reap no advantage, and who, when she first solicited his advice, honestly told him that she was without money, or resources to raise any.

It will perhaps be said, that Miss Neville's personal attractions had a share in exciting the benevolence of Mr. Lambton. That they were allowed their due influence, is not to be denied; it was, however, the superiority of her understanding, and the generosity displayed on behalf of her brother to the manifest injury of her own fortune and future prospects, that secured his friendship. Though an admirer of the fair sex, Mr. Lambton never for an instant failed in the respectful attentions which, as the daughter of his intimate friend,

his client might have expected ; on this score she had not the smallest claim, Mr. Neville, when living, being scarcely known to Mr. Lambton by name.

Blush, ye who throw indiscriminate censures on every branch of this profession, premising that your characters are drawn from the life, and from having actually suffered all the tortures of suspense and delay that legal oppression can invent. The truth of this position is not disputed ; if, however, displaying the baseness and villany of a few, tends to stigmatize all practitioners of the law, it is equally to be expected that recording the living excellence of some of its members, will in like manner reflect lustre on the whole body ; and this feeble attempt is made to evince the gratitude of an individual to particular persons, by whom she has been rendered the most important services ; nor is she connected by any ties,

save those of friendship, with one person belonging to the profession of the law.

Being told on entering her own house, that a person had called, who seemed very anxious to see her, and who would have waited had there been any certainty of her returning till the evening ; she questioned the servant as to his appearance, which in truth, from description, was so questionable, that she began to fear it was an understrapper of the law, whom some of her brother's creditors might have sent to frighten her into a liquidation of their demands, as no person had been apprized of her having already yielded up her property. All the tradesmen of Hampstead, and others, with whom her brother had dealt in town, considering her as a woman of fortune, had been profuse in their offers of service and credit, which, in some instances, she

had found herself under the necessity of accepting.

An urgent and even insolent application for payment of seventeen pounds, due for muslins, &c. on her own account, made by her haberdasher, with whom her family had dealt from their arrival in England to the present time, had escaped her memory. Looking to the last letter she had received on the subject, which was, she perceived, an attorney's, seeing that the time fixed by the retailer of small wares was already expired, and that he then assured her he would be trifled with no longer, but must take the necessary steps to enforce payment ; with a heavy heart, she took pen in hand, entreating Mr. Linton's further lenity, assuring him that in a fortnight's time a bill which she had received from the West Indies would become due, when her first employment would be to wait on him to

discharge his account, which she most deeply regretted not having had it in her power to settle in the beginning of the year, as had hitherto been her constant practice. This done, her ingenuity was next exerted in trying to eke out the remains of half a guinea, so as to have silver enough to carry her to and from Clapton, this being Wednesday evening. Thursday she devoted to looking over papers, destroying great numbers, and selecting what it might be proper to deposit in the hands of Mr. Lambton. This day she was permitted to pass unmolested either by visitors or duns. At a very early hour on Friday morning she set off for Clapton; and arriving there by noon, she had some hours friendly conversation with Mrs. Lambton before Mr. Lambton returned from business in town. After a light dinner, and an early dish of tea, Mr. Lambton requested her at-

tendance in his study, where they might peruse papers and documents at leisure.

The result of these communications was, that a meeting of her brother's creditors should be called, to whom was to be explained the cruel predicament in which she was placed; that, instead of being able to offer any terms from herself, to induce them to grant a discharge to her brother, as had been suggested by some, the only chance of her having any means to live was their allowing her to come in as a creditor on the same footing with themselves. The precision with which she stated the various occasions on which she had been induced to advance money for her brother, as well as the entries in his books (of which she had taken minutes in order to obtain Mr. Lambton's opinion as to the validity of her claims), agreeing both as to tenour and date,

made him assure her that of whatever sums could be collected, she would undoubtedly have a proportionate share.

On communicating to Mr. Lambton the language used to her by the haberdasher, he said, 'twas a pity but she had contrived to pay him part of the sum due ; for such a fellow would not scruple to insult a woman whom he considered as defenceless ; and had his bill been within ten pounds, he must have been satisfied to wait. This was information to Constantia which she did not relish ; for the possibility of an arrest being meditated, had never entered her thoughts. Mr. Lambton told her, if she had any reason to imagine that a writ had been issued against her by Linton or any one else, she had better go from home as quietly and as soon as she could ; that he would summon the creditors to a general meeting the following week ; and he doubted not, when that was over, she might return

to Hampstead, and form any plans that she pleased for the future disposal of herself. " You must excuse these people, Miss Neville," continued Mr. Lambton, " for doubting your inclination as well as ability to pay them; your brother's disappearing has infused suspicions into their minds, which are not to be wondered at; and it is possible they may suppose you were privy to his design long before he executed it. When a clear statement of all pecuniary transactions between Mr. Neville and yourself is laid before them, they will pity you as much for being his dupe, as they are now exasperated at imagining you a party in defrauding them of what is justly their due. This business being in some measure dispatched, tell me, fair lady, what do you mean to do with yourself when the house and furniture at Hampstead shall have been sold?"

" At present, I have no fixed plan;"

replied Constantia. " I flatter myself that some situation may be procured, where I might be respectfully treated, and yet strive to be an useful member of society, since I can no longer be an independent one. I thank heaven, I have been brought up in such a manner as to consider poverty no disgrace, if not the consequence of indiscretion ; and I am also certain, that to whomsoever I should dedicate the exertion of my abilities, they would have no cause to regret any confidence which they might repose in me."

" Of that I am well assured," rejoined Mr. Lambton, " and I have something to propose for your consideration, or I should not have taken the liberty of asking the question. I have a young man under my care (I am not going to make love for him by proxy, don't mistake me), who has had an immense property bequeathed to him by his father ; being not yet nineteen,

I believe, by the time he reaches his majority it will by accumulation be little short of half a million. His name is the same as the maiden one of your mother ; and who knows but we may contrive to claim a relationship between the families, by which means you may come in for a slice of his wealth. That may be an after consideration ; the present one is, that, having shaken off his tutors, and being fully resolved not to go to either of the universities, he is now looking out for a house a few miles from town, wherein to settle himself and a sister about fourteen, lately from Nevis (both being natives of that island), who needs polishing not a little ; and I am sure if she is capable of receiving any, you can give her not only that, but a great deal of wholesome instruction, which I am sorry to say she very much requires. She has ten thousand pounds to her portion, which is a trifle when compared to her

brother's, who, I think, might conceive himself highly honoured by your presiding at the head of his table, and undertaking to fashion the young Creole, were he to allow you from his own purse an annual sum equal to the interest of her fortune."

"You are pleased to flatter me, Sir," said Miss Neville; "terms would be the least difficulty with me; the character and connections of the contracting party will be the principal point to ascertain. But how comes it that a young man who might aspire to a seat in parliament, and other honours where eloquence is requisite, should have so little of a proper kind of ambition, as to give up the pursuit of knowledge, at the very period of his life when he is the most likely to benefit by continuing a course of study?"

"He is idle, and knows that money will command all that he now considers necessary to happiness," answered Mr.

Lambton. " His fondness for his sister is one of the best points I have been able to discover in his character; and even that is displayed in a way by no means creditable to his judgment, or to her advantage; for he spends the whole day in driving her about the town and its suburbs in his curricule, and in the evening carries her to see some spectacle. A sister of his father's, a plain sensible woman, whom he sent for out of Dorsetshire, to take the care of his household for a few months, is fatigued beyond measure with attending Miss Carleton to the playhouse, &c. If we could prevail on the young man to relinquish the charge of his sister entirely to you, giving the sum before mentioned, you could take a small house by us, and live more comfortably than in the high style that he would prefer; in that case, we might be able to procure another pupil or two for you, who, requiring less attention, might be

taken with more profit for less than half the money. From your brother's house you would probably have furniture enough of your own for the apartments which would require to be fitted up at first."

" You are very good, Sir, to think so deeply on my affairs ; but may I ask how Miss Carleton has been suffered to remain so long in the West-Indies. Except where an uncommon degree of attention is paid by parents, young persons of both sexes, who continue there after seven years old, run great risk of contamination from the negroes. The danger to females is, consequently, greatest. Did Mrs. Carleton die before her husband ?"

" My relation was never married ; these are his natural children."

" The style of living at Nevis must be very different then from what it was at Barbadoes ; for in that island there was no instance of any resident having

a white mistress; all men of fortune, who were not married, had their brown women; but such connections were kept among domestics, the issue of them brought up as slaves, and not unfrequently sold on the death of the master of the estate. We have many Incles and Yaricos in the Leeward Islands."

It is hardly possible to do justice to the scene that followed, when the unsuspecting Constantia was informed, that Mr. and Miss Carleton were the children of different slaves, the property of their father, whose will expressed this. By it also he bequeathed trifling legacies to several others of his offspring, not any two of which were by the same woman; and what led her still more to execrate the memory of a man who could thus write, or cause to be written, a libel on himself, was his having left the paltry sum of five thousand pounds to a brother, a clergyman

in Dorsetshire, of small preferment, and considerable merit, who had two sons and four daughters but slenderly provided for, and who had been buoyed up with the hope of succeeding to great part of their uncle's possessions. In case this young man, the Afric Creolian, should die under age, the older Mr. Carleton bequeathed the residue of his property to his brother and his issue. In the interim he was appointed his guardian, and ought also to have been the director of his conduct; but the perusal of his father's will had made the young gentleman too absolute to be under any person's controul. Thus do we see that the fairest fabrics created by the imagination, are the soonest and easiest demolished.

While listening to the discourse of Mr. Lambton, our heroine had, in the twinkling of an eye, hired a house of moderate rent and genteel appearance in his neighbourhood, and she had fur-

nished most of the apartments ; under his and good Mrs. Lambton's auspices and friendly patronage she had procured other wards, in addition to Miss Carleton, whom, before *they* became inmates of her peaceful dwelling, she had brought into a state of cultivation, not doubting but, from being her countrywoman, she should soon acquire such a degree of influence over her mind as would make her compliant and flexible from affection. This point gained, all that followed was to be equally accommodating to her wishes. Need I give a stronger proof of that sanguineness of disposition which was the striking feature of Miss Neville's character ? On discovering, as in this instance, the fallacy of her hopes and expectations, she was, notwithstanding she felt disappointment most keenly, never led to despond. She instantly discerned, that the demolition of her aerial castles originated in her own ardour, in raising

them on such brittle foundations, and as quickly resolved that she would profit by past experience, and calculate accordingly. She has, however, frequently confessed to her nearest friends, that at times, when the issue of some project for rendering her independent and comfortable has proved unfavourable to her wishes, she has experienced no regret for having cherished hopes that were not realized, as they had beguiled her of some heavy hours, and she never found any *present* misfortune half so difficult to conquer, as those anticipated by fancy.

Thus does he who framed us temper the various parts of our composition in such a manner, that all possess a much more equal distribution of his gifts, than the children of adversity, who do not reason deeply, are willing to allow—Not so our heroine : no sooner did she retire to her chamber, than she prostrated herself before her Maker, with

no view of saying, like the proud Pharisee in the Gospel, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are:" No, but to beg of his infinite mercy, that she might never depart from his commandments; that she might, above all things, be kept from presumptuous sin; that she might not be induced to condemn the offspring for the crimes of their parents, who possibly, from the opportunities of improvement they had enjoyed, were more acceptable in his eyes than she was; that he would inspire her with humility, and a spirit of conformity suitable to her situation; and that if she were to be an instrument of correcting the early vices contracted by her young country woman, who, though of a different complexion, was still of the same species with herself, she might feel elevated, rather than debased, by the office appointed her.

The truly pious may thus seek to

bend to the exigencies of things. Early impressions are, however, seldom eradicated. Constantia wet her pillow with her tears, while she recalled to mind the injunctions of her father, on no pretext to converse or associate with mulattoes; they commonly possessed, in his opinion, the predominate bad qualities of both Europeans and Africans. His commands she had always been accustomed to hold sacred, and to believe they were the result of good sense, mature deliberation, and unbiased judgment. She had forborne, the preceding evening, to give any decisive answer to Mr. Lambton, who saw the workings of her mind, and, on returning to the company of his wife, purposely drew her attention from his proposal, by introducing general subjects of conversation.

The next morning being uncommonly pleasant, Mrs. Lambton proposed to her guest taking a ramble, to look at

some houses that were to be let, as she should be much gratified by having Miss Neville for a neighbour; and as Mr. Lambton was engaged in town, they could dine at what hour suited her convenience; after which she would take her part of the way home, having to call in St. Helen's for Mr. Lambton in the evening. This plan being agreed on, Mr. Lambton, in the course of conversation, carelessly introduced an account of the Carletons in Dorsetshire, hinting the probability of young Carleton taking his sister on a tour to the western coast, and to pay his relations a visit previous to his settling either her or himself. "You would like such an excursion, Miss Neville, (he continued) the party would travel in the true West-Indian style—equipages and horsemen in abundance"—Constantia forced a smile while she bowed assent.

House-hunting had not been one of

our heroine's amusements. Being always disposed to court the stay of Time, and to endeavour to make him her friend, she had not been reduced to the various expedients devised by modern fine ladies, for *killing* this hoary-headed gentleman, as they term their various morning occupations; an exploit more difficult to atchieve than any undertaken by the most adventurous knight of ancient chivalry; for, as days and hours are lopped off, the rising of new ones must make their labour perpetual, while useful employment, or study, would answer every purpose that dissipation of time can possibly do, and open rational sources for amusement in old age, when an enfeebled body will not permit of attending auctions, shopping, &c. &c. This by way of advice to those of my readers who may be under twenty-five, (for after that age they will have become too certain of their own superiority to

imagine that the writer of a novel can make them wiser and better,) and to account for the perplexity in which the thoughts of Miss Neville were involved, as to the motive to be assigned by her for requesting to view the interior of any lady or gentleman's house; and if there were no apparent objections to be formed to the accommodation, what reason she should assign for failing to give an immediate answer. Mrs. Lambton soon eased those fears; for, with the address of a woman of the world, she premised, that it was for an absent friend that her enquiry was made, whose answer could not be obtained in less than a fortnight. In that time Constantia had not the smallest doubt of her designs being so far brought to bear, as to enable her to reject or adopt the plan suggested by Mr. Lambton.

On their return home, while discoursing on the convenience and in-

conveniences of the different habitations that they had been surveying, both ladies espied an elegant curricule, with two gaily apparelled well-mounted outriders, moving up and down at no great distance from Mr. Lambton's house. On the servant passing by them, Mrs. Lambton enquired if their master was waiting to see her. "No, madam; he was going to call upon you, when Mrs. Davenport's servant came out to say, that his mistress requested to see him."—"I am determined not to lose this opportunity of introducing you to Ned Carleton," said Mrs. Lambton to her companion; "he is so volatile, that when he hears Mr. Lambton is not at Clapton, he may go off without paying me a visit. You shall, therefore, go with me to Mrs. Davenport's, where we cannot now fail of meeting him." This was no sooner said than done. The ladies were asked into the dining-parlour, the young West Indian

being evidently closeted on business with the lady of the house, in the apartment where she usually received forenoon visitors.

After they had waited some minutes, Mrs. Davenport and Mr. Carleton made their appearance, the latter only to pay his compliments to Mrs. Lambton, having, as he said, an appointment to meet Sir John Restless in Hyde-Park at two o'clock, and he must drive like the Devil, or he should be too late to see him. Springing from the door to the step of his curricie, he wheeled off with such velocity, that his coursers seemed literally to outstrip the wind.

Mrs. Davenport now deemed it necessary to apologise to her guests for allowing them to remain so long alone. "You know, my dear madam," continued Mrs. Davenport, affecting no small consequence, "that this young man is governess mad; he applied to me for my advice respecting his sister;

I said, send her instantly to one of the high-finishing seminaries at the west-end of the town, where only a select number of the daughters of people of fashion are received. Terms can be no object to you. This he would not agree to, because he cannot bear to lose her society; and he is sure that his dear Felicia would pine herself into a consumption, if she were to be restricted as young ladies at boarding-school are. He remembers how he hated school himself, when he came first from Nevis; then, I replied, "your only recourse is to procure a governess for her at home." "That is what every body says; but yet none of my acquaintance bestir themselves to get one." This reproach made me go to work; and I sent for him to-day to communicate my success; such a governess is not often to be heard of; never being in any but the first families,—educated Ladies Charlotte and Lucy Ledyard, and the

Honourable Miss Hills—recommended by my Lady Di Bentley, the Countess of Castleton, and I cannot tell who beside.”

Mrs. Lambton rather sarcastically observed, “ that it was a wonder that a lady so powerfully connected, should be in want of a situation.”

“ So it would, but she does not give up for some months, her pupil, Miss Almeria Hill, who was presented in the spring, and made her appearance on the last birth-day. Madame Montray’s instruction, indeed, can be no longer requisite; yet I believe, till the young lady marries the Marquis of Tralee, and goes to Ireland, it is not intended that she should quit my Lord Hill’s family.

It became so evident, that this panegyric on Madame Montray, was composed by Mrs. Davenport, in order to overpower her auditors with the splendour of her own acquaintance, that

though the fine-wove highly-ornamented gilt scroll was taken out of the envelope, the seal of which was decorated with a coronet and supporters, for the purpose of reading to Mrs. Lambton what Lady Di Bentley had written on the subject, she rather abruptly put an end to her visit, alledging, that Miss Neville and herself would scarcely have time to dress for dinner, which was ordered more than an hour before the usual time, as they were going to town early in the afternoon.

Mrs. Lambton, while walking on, said, " I would not have you be discouraged, Miss Neville, by the communications of Mrs. Davenport; surely Ned Carleton will sooner attend to our recommendation, at whose house he has been received as a child of the family from his first coming to England, than to this officious lady, to whom I am confident he never applied for advice,

though politeness obliges him to listen to her offers of service."

Constantia thanked her friend in language suitable to her situation, and while she avoided declaring her repugnance to becoming the inmate of any house where such a being as Mr. Edward Carleton could have free egress, she requested, that unless strongly solicited to recommend to him a proper person to superintend the education of his sister, neither she nor Mr. Lambton would mention her name as a candidate for the situation, as she doubted not that, without a few right honourable testimonials in her favour, her claims to approbation would be deemed inadmissible.

When set down by Mrs. Lambton on the Hampstead-road a little before six, Constantia felt her limbs so feeble, that she thought she could never accomplish the remainder of her journey. To avoid meeting her acquaintance, as

well as attracting the notice of the people of the village, she took the most unfrequented paths; and when arrived safe at her own door, found herself almost overpowered by fatigue, and an unusual weight at her heart. The servant perceiving her to be uncommonly pale, instead of bringing her the tumbler of water she asked for, insisted on getting her a glass of Madeira, which in a great measure revived her spirits. Before she had time to enquire whether any person had called, or any letters had been received in her absence, she was interrupted by a rap at the door, announcing a visitor, which proved to be Mr. Wetherall, who, having learnt the day before that she was gone to Clapton, came with an appearance of friendliness to be informed of the result of her conference.

Affecting not to notice the dejection of his friend, he asked so many abrupt questions, and seemed so particularly

desirous of expressing his doubts respecting Mr. Lambton's zeal in her cause, unless it could be traced to some sinister motive, that Constantia, wearied out with his cynical remarks, forbore to make any reply. Her silence made him somewhat ashamed of his behaviour, when all at once he rose to depart, saying, that he feared he had obtruded his presence at a time when rest and quiet were absolutely necessary. He would, therefore, bid her a good evening, hoping the next day to meet her more able to converse on business; he would then learn what services he could render her in town on Monday.

This good-natured proposal banished all resentment from the mind of Constantia. Rising, she gave her hand to Mr. Wetherall, saying, "I thank you for your consideration; I shall be happy to receive you to-morrow; for I have much to communicate, and your advice

may be peculiarly serviceable to me at this time." Re-assured, she retired to rest, rose refreshed by sleep, went to church, from which place she returned home to wait for her promised visitor. Several of her village acquaintance paid their customary compliments of forenoon calls; fortunately, however, none of those came who were authorized by long intimacy to ask any pointed questions respecting her brother; for such enquiries would have been answered in a manner to excite curiosity, rather than to gratify it.

Worn out with expectation, she sat down to a cheerless meal, yet still doubted not that Mr. Wetherall would keep his promise, and call in the course of the afternoon. She began, therefore, to write some letters which she meant to entrust to his care, to put into the post-office in London. Night coming, and not Mr. Wetherall, she sat pensive and alone, meditating on the slight de-

pendence to be placed on the faith of man. Looking backwards to the happy years that she had known, no traces of which were now left, save in the stores of memory, she wept bitterly at the dreary future penciled by imagination. She found, that by far the greater part of mankind were led to do benevolent actions for the sake of gratifying themselves, rather than from purity of intention, or a desire to benefit others. While she could amuse Mr. Wetherall by her sprightly conversation, and, instead of being wounded by his irony, could rally him in turn, he was assiduous to serve her, and on some occasions had been an useful acquaintance; but now, that she needed support and sympathy, he relaxed in his attentions, fearful of her becoming querulous, or perhaps requiring pecuniary aid, which no man on earth was less prone to afford, even to his nearest friend, than Mr. Wetherall.

When the servant came to ask her mistress if she required a candle, she found her in tears. With much tenderness, she said, " Ah, madam! why do you stay moping at home so? You should have gone to Highgate to-day. Excuse my freedom; but I thought you told Mr. Wetherall you should go there."—"I believe I did," replied Constantia, (not willing that her domestic should be sensible of the slight she had received) " but I was not well enough this afternoon to be in company."—"Indeed, madam," continued Betty, " you fatigue yourself too much by walking up that steep hill; you was for all the world as if you would have fainted, when I opened the door to you last night. I was quite surprised to see you; for, to be plain, I did not expect you back again; and I wish you had staid away, for that ill-looking fellow who came when you were in town on Wednesday, called again yesterday morning,

and was very inquisitive to know if you had slept at home on Friday night; he made me tremble all over, he looked so much like those horrid men they call bailiffs; he stayed at the public-house till seven o'clock last night; and if you had come home the usual way, he would have seen you. The mistress of the George says, that she knows he is one of them people, and that she dares to say, he will be down to-morrow."

Constantia gasped for breath. The vindictive Linton,—a *writ*,—a *spunging-house*,—a *prison*, all swam before her eyes. At another season she would have dispatched a special messenger to Mr. Wetherall, requesting to see him previous to his going to town in the morning. She then recollected his sarcastic remarks on her passing two days at Clapton, on pretence of consulting an attorney, and his ridicule of her spending her morning so unprofitably as in looking at houses which she could

not take, until released from the care of that which she now inhabited. She even fancied that he had since heard there was a writ issued against her, and that he had stayed away on purpose to avoid being asked to become her bail.

In this forlorn deserted condition, is it to be wondered at, that our heroine was led to deviate from her usual prudence; that she listened to the counsels of the only person with whom she could communicate; and that the result was a determination to leave the house by the garden-door early in the morning, to go across the fields to Highgate, in order to get into either a returned chaise, or the first stage which left the place, for London; and, when there, to deliberate on the proper place for her to wait the issue of the meeting of creditors? By this circuitous mode of travelling, she hoped

to avoid being seen by any one who might be instructed to watch her motions. This resolved upon, she began a more minute scrutiny of her papers; sealing up in packets confidential letters, and indorsing each with the party's name. When she came to those of her father and mother, she found some of so old a date as previous to their marriage. This is indeed "A Tale of other Times," she exclaimed, in writing the words "Correspondence of my beloved, ever-to-be-regretted parents;" and she indulged a luxury of grief, which, in some degree, relieved her bursting heart, and enabled her to proceed in her self-imposed task. In making up her accounts to the very day, she found little difficulty; having been always accustomed to make regular entries of receipts and disbursements, every transaction was clear and open. The bill received from Montagu she had omit-

ted to enter, conceiving it to be the half-year's interest due to her when he left London.

It being about the middle of June, when the days are nearly at the longest, light broke in upon her through the shutters ere she had thought of repose. Having given orders to be called at six, she ventured to go to bed. Worn out by bodily fatigue and mental anguish, her short slumbers tended but little to banish either. Who can paint the feelings of the upright, the strictly conscientious child of misfortune, in bidding adieu to a place which she had entered under the most auspicious circumstances; as she flew rather than walked through the garden, she aspirated faintly, "If Conolly had been in England, I should not have been altogether in so forlorn a condition. The recollection of the conversation that passed between them previous to his departure, made her stifle this emo-

tion, and, putting her trust in Providence, she, with one half-crown-piece in her pocket, and her night cap, darted across the field which led to the great north-road. At the Horns at Highgate was standing the stage-coach for London. Finding there was one inside-place vacant, she got into the vehicle, closely wrapped up in her veil and long shawl; nor did she, for some time, discern that one of her fellow-passengers was Mr. Wetherall. The sight of a noxious reptile could not, at that moment, have been more repelling to Constantia, than this gentleman, who affected to be at ease, though a seat of thorns would have been less irksome than that now occupied by him.

The weather, and Saturday night's Gazette, with its numerous list of bankrupts, being pretty fully discussed, and the passengers, who were inhabitants of Highgate, set down, Mr. We-

therall ventured to ask, in an apparently careless manner, "Whither so early this morning, Miss Neville?" "I am going, Sir, to my brother's 'compting-house," was the laconic answer. Alighting soon after, he said, in a low voice, "I shall see you by and by." Constantia replied not, but by an inclination of the head. To the old housekeeper, Mrs. Geary, she confided the necessity which urged her to quit Hampstead, though without a hint as to the place to which she should retire. Two changes of linen, which she left packed up, and addressed to her brother's clerk in Broad-street, she desired might be sent thither the following day; then, giving her the necessary keys, she requested her to go off as quickly as possible, to prevent any depredations which might be made on the property in her absence. This done, she borrowed a few shillings of

her, and left word for Mr. Wetherall, when he called, that being obliged to go to the west end of the town, it was out of her power to wait his coming. One of her letters, written the preceding afternoon, was to a gentleman who had a 'compting-house in Mark-lane, and whose family lived at Camberwell, whither she proposed going for a short time, and had in the letter requested Mr. and Mrs. Orme to get her a lodging by Wednesday. A personal application to the same effect being now necessary, she called upon Mr. Orme, explaining her situation. He immediately, with great kindness, offered her a bed in his own house, and every attention that himself and Mrs. Orme could render her. Having so far arranged matters she wished to reach Henrietta-street, on the chance of meeting Somers, to acquaint him with her proceedings, and to write

from thence to Mr. Lambton, in order that he might, without loss of time, take the necessary steps for acquainting all concerned with the actual state of her brother's mercantile and other transactions. Heavy rain prevented her from going further than Ludgate-hill. At the shop of a stationer there, with whom she usually dealt, she procured the implements for writing, and some refreshment, of which, by this time, she felt the want. In Fleet-street she got a stage to Camberwell, where she arrived while Mr. and Mrs. Orme were taking their first glass after dinner.

Mrs. Orme's reception of Constan-tia was truly kind ; the tear of sympathy trembled in her eye, while she intreated her guest to be comforted, for all would soon be well ; in the mean time she begged her to consider herself as if in the house of a sister, and a fel-

low-sufferer from the imprudence of others. Mrs. Orme had been taught, in the school of affliction, how to feel for the woes of her neighbours ; she knew, from experience, that there were situations in which a man or woman possessing the strictest probity may find a temporary concealment from persecution unavoidable ; and that, by taking such a step, they are enabled to do equal justice to all, while a surrender of their persons would only gratify the malignancy of individuals, or lead to compromises by which the interests of indulgent creditors would be sacrificed, and those of the inexorable preferred in their stead.

It required all the warmth testified by the mistress of the house to conquer the coldness evident in the constrained manner of its master. To account for the different language he had made use of in Mark-lane, was beyond the

ability of Constantia, unless she could suffer herself to think that Mr. Wetherall, who was an acquaintance of Mr. Orme's, had seen him in the interval, and (for what purpose she could not fathom) on hearing of her having finally quitted Hampstead, had chosen to condemn her precipitancy, and to suggest that another mode of conduct would have been more judicious. Whether delivering his own sentiments, or echoing those of another, equally wounding to the feelings of the hapless wanderer, was Mr. Orme's openly censuring her for deserting her brother's house, and his advising her return thither the next morning, being confident, as he said, that her interests would materially suffer by her absence, the creditors probably inferring from it, that she knew her conduct to be as censurable as Montagu's had been. Constantia was herself aware that this

might be their first conclusion. An investigation, however, she trusted would soon clear her in their eyes. At any rate, the advice was ill-timed. To return was impracticable, while the odium attached to *absconding* was in no degree wiped off. She had now put her whole concerns into the hands of Mr. Lambton, who was apprized of her removal and present station. To depart, therefore, till she heard either from him or Mr. Dornford, was utterly impossible.

After the exertions of the last twenty-four hours, it will not be expected that Miss Neville could be a very enlivening companion, and her request to retire was readily complied with. Mrs. Orme, not a little disconcerted by the abrupt manner of her husband, strove (after she attended her guest to her chamber) to palliate it, by saying, that two years before he had been induced,

by the advice of a lawyer, when under similar circumstances, to act contrary to his judgment in many respects, and that in doing so he had materially injured his own interests, as, had he been on the spot, he would not have been implicated in the blame that was attached to the conduct of a person, who, though not his partner, had contrived to involve him so much, that nothing short of a complete surrender of his property could have enabled him to come forward again as a commercial character. "Be assured," she continued, "that he is not the less interested in your welfare, because he speaks strongly, and as you may think, harshly; you will make allowance for him, when you recollect, that conversing on your affairs renews his own grievances. Though he has not the slightest knowledge of Messrs. Lambton and Dornford, he told you that their proceedings would be dilatory,

because he knows those of his own attorney were marked by delay."

This friendly explanation on the part of Mrs. Orme reconciled Constantia to the possibility of remaining a few days in her house ; she, however, perceived that there was an absolute necessity for her being in town to see Mr. Lambton, previous to his meeting the creditors, though she did not quite coincide with Mr. Orme in his proposal of her having a lodging within a few doors of her attorney's chambers, that she might stimulate them to pay a proper attention to her concerns. She had frequently been told by her father and others, that her sex were deemed too unreasonable in their expectations when they had business to transact ; imagining, that the persons employed by them had no other objects to engross their attention but those in which they were interested ; and, knowing herself to be in the hands of gentlemen fully

adequate to what they had undertaken, she determined not to tease them with fruitless enquiries, judging, that to doubt their zeal was the surest way to make them indifferent.

CHAP. XXI.

Of chance or change, O let not man complain,
 Else shall he never, never cease to wail;
 For, from the imperial dome to where the swain
 Rears the lone cottage in the silent dale,
 All feel the assault of Fortune's fickle gale.

BEATTIE'S MINSTREL.

THE retired manner in which Mr. and Mrs. Orme lived, was to Miss Neville a strong inducement for making their house an asylum in the season of distress. The easy distance from town, and her having never made Camberwell a resting-place before, pointed it out to her as an eligible situation to take a lodging in, till her affairs were so far arranged as to enable her to visit where she pleased. Through Mr. Orme she hoped to have that communication with the great city which her business might require, and parcels

left for her, addressed to him at Mark-lane, could be conveyed in his chaise without exposing her name to stage-coachmen, or any person supposing that she was his neighbour. Too soon did she regret not having adhered to her original plan of going into a lodging. She could then have requested a small loan of Somers; but after stating to him the readiness with which Mr. Orme offered to accommodate her, she could not, in so short a time, say, that she had mistaken common civility for friendly concern.

Mrs. Orme guessed the state of Miss Neville's purse, but knew not how to offer the trifling aid in her power to afford. Mr. Orme was sincere in wishing to relieve his guest from the difficulties of her situation, though he could not forbear from wounding her feelings, by using the language of reprehension, at a time when the mind, depressed by sorrow, had lost its elas-

ticity, and should have been roused to exertion by the soothing accents of friendship and kindness. Finding her resolved on going to town, he offered to carry her up in his chaise, and to see if there was no way of getting some money for her at her brother's 'compting-house; for, till the creditors had met, the clerk would hardly refuse to honour her draft for a small sum, which he was sure she would require, particularly in lodgings. This offer induced her to communicate the remittance received from her brother, and the answer given by Captain Conolly's agents.

“ That is more than a week ago,” replied Mr. Orme; “ they may since have had advice from the principal. Go yourself to Serjeant's-Inn to-morrow morning; and if you get the bill accepted, I will advance you the money on it; remember that Mr. Lambton's letter says, he has fixed the meet-

ing for Friday; therefore no time is to be lost; perhaps you do not recollect that to-morrow is Thursday."

This was indeed most true; for from the hour on Sunday-night at which she determined to leave Hampstead, so confused and bewildered were the intellects of Miss Neville, that she sometimes imagined many days must have interfered. The tortures of suspense who can describe that have not endured them! the blow that strikes the defenceless victim to the earth is easier to be borne, than the dread of evil which we cannot ward off, and which we know must, at no distant period, overwhelm ourselves or families in ruin.

Constantia, unable to state any reason for not chusing to go to Captain Conolly's agents, but what would be easily refuted by Mr. Orme in consideration of the urgency of the case, simply remarked the danger to be ap-

prehended from the emissaries of Mr. Linton, should any of them discover her in London streets. “ That (said Mr. Orme) is a very remote probability. I will go over Blackfriars-bridge with you, and turn up one of the streets on the left hand, where I can get a boy to take care of my horse, while I pilot you through the narrow avenues to the Temple, whence you will easily find your way to Serjeant’s-Inn. I would call on Messrs. C—— and D——— myself for you, if I were not well assured that you will meet with a degree of attention from them which will not be paid to me.”

Constantia thanked her host; and while she recollected Somers’s description of the repulsive manners of the partner with whom he had conversed, she hoped that he would be in a better humour to receive her; or, that if the junior member of the house possessed more urbanity and gentleness, she

should be so fortunate as to find him in the office. At a house near the Haymarket, where several of her father's West-India friends had lodged, and with the mistress of which she had always kept up a kind of intercourse, she doubted not, at such a season, to be accommodated with lodgings. She, therefore, wrote to Mr. Lambton, requesting him to call upon her there on Friday, previous to his meeting the gentlemen he had summoned to confer together at six in the evening. This letter Mr. Orme undertook to send to St. Helen's immediately on his arrival in town.

To the great disappointment of Miss Neville, her parcel of clothes had never yet been delivered at Mark-lane. The light apparel generally worn in June, was not a little the worse for the wear; the stage-coaches and wet streets on the first day, having taken off its snowy hue, before she reached the habitation of

Mrs. Orme. This lady, unluckily, was of so diminutive a size, that none of her garments could be of the least service to her friend. In a garb so equivocal, Constantia was obliged to appear among total strangers, and she trembled with apprehension, as she knocked at the door, lest the gentlemen to whom she must introduce herself, should suspect her connection with one or other of the persons named in the bill, to be wholly different from that subsisting between brother and sister.

The modest demeanour of a truly virtuous woman, however, will always ensure her respect; and men are, without doubt, better judges of who deserve this appellation, than we are of each other. The surly man of business, whom Somers had described as scarcely deigning to lift his eye from the book in which he was making an entry, came forward to inform Miss Neville, that the letter which they had

written to Captain Conolly respecting the bill, did not reach Ireland previous to his setting out for London, where he now was, and they expected him at their office in a few hours; at the same moment, placing before her pen, ink, and paper, he said that he would deliver into the Captain's own hand, any communication that she might chuse to write, though he could not give his address, not being himself apprized where he had taken lodgings: of this obliging offer, Miss Neville was compelled to avail herself. Writing from the impulse of the moment, and standing at a public desk, she probably betrayed the agitation of her spirits, while she merely intended to request that the bill might be accepted, and sent to her in Oxendon-street, if possible, before three o'clock, as she should remain there till that hour; making her obeisance to Mr. C——, she tripped down the steps, leading into Mitre-court, with a

much lighter heart, than when at the foot of them she had shaken hands with Mr. Orme, and thanked him for his attention, while he wished her good luck, and bade her take special care of herself, now that she had got among the lawyers.

To avoid the public avenues, where she would have been ashamed to meet any person whom she knew, on account of the shabbiness of her appearance, she continued through the bye paths leading from the Temple to Arundel-street. Crossing the Strand, she reached the top of Catherine-street without molestation, when a heavy shower of rain obliged her to take shelter in a shop. Again fearful of being recognised, and that her steps would be watched, she requested the master of the shop to send his boy for a coach. Having but one shilling and a few pence in her pocket, the delay of half an hour appeared to her an interval of inconceiv-

able length, particularly as she dreaded that the messenger might expect to be rewarded with silver for his trouble, and that the fare of the coachman might be extended to eighteen-pence or two shillings.

When the coach arrived, she was relieved from the latter part of her distress, by the boy telling his master, that after running first as far as the Adelphi, and then to Temple-Bar, he met with a coach at the end of the street, when he was returning home to know if he might continue the search. Most thankfully did Constantia bestow upon the boy a reward proportioned to her ability, but far short of her inclination. Seated in the carriage, she gave way to her emotions. When it drew up at the door of Mrs. Baker, she strove to wipe away her tears, and to appear as if nothing extraordinary had led her to Oxendon-street. Entering immediately on the subject of lodgings, she was sur-

prised and mortified to hear that Mrs. Baker had not a bed disengaged, even that in her own parlour, where she usually slept, being occupied by her brother from Leicestershire; in order to accommodate whom, she was herself obliged to share her servant's bed in the kitchen. Miss Neville might make what appointments on business she pleased at her house; the parlour should be at her service from eight in the morning till the same hour in the evening; and all letters and messages received in her absence taken particular care of. This was being as civil as the state of her family permitted, but where (thought Constantia) am I to lay my head, and if I can find shelter for the night, how am I to transport myself to and from this place, without attracting notice which might lead to unpleasant consequences? Urgent as the necessity was for remaining to receive either Captain Conolly or his messenger, it ap-

peared of still more importance to sally forth in quest of a lodging. Recollecting a tradesman in Jermyn-street, who had been under some obligations to her father, she determined to go to him for advice, not doubting that he could recommend her to some of his neighbours, while Mrs. Baker, who lived by letting lodgings, was unwilling to name any person, lest it should weaken her own interest. Leaving an open note, authorizing Mrs. Baker to receive the bill in her absence, Constantia paid her next visit to Mr. Clark, who received her with respect so blended with warmth, as the daughter of a man by whose interest his success in life had been promoted, that she found no difficulty in communicating her present embarrassed state, and consulting him as to the place where it would be proper for her to stay till her affairs were in some degree arranged.

Owing to parliament sitting so late,

Mr. Clark observed, every house in his neighbourhood was fully occupied, his own completely so; his sister, who she might remember, married a stone-mason that had done some work for Mr. Neville, was now a widow with one child. Her husband having failed in business, and previous to his death been afflicted for a long time with a severe illness, had left her in very narrow circumstances. She lived in a small house in an obscure situation, on the Surry-side of Westminster-bridge; but should so humble a lodging be deemed by Miss Neville fit for her reception, he was confident his sister, Mrs. Younger, would exert herself to accommodate her in the best manner the size of her house would allow; and from his having seen her the preceding evening, when she had a bed-room and parlour undisposed of, he doubted not that she could admit a lodger on a moment's notice.

This was glad tidings to the houseless wanderer, who recollected enough of Mrs. Younger, to be well convinced that under her roof she would be protected from insult. Mr. Clark asking if himself, or any of his people, could serve Miss Neville, by carrying messages for her, she recollected that Somers's eldest daughter was in the house of a person in a respectable line of business, not far from Jermyn-street, and that by writing a note to either the principal or the journey-woman, intelligence of her present distress might be conveyed to Henrietta-street, without any person there having a suspicion that the messenger was entrusted with a commission from her. This she thought a wise precaution, lest Captain Conolly should not call at his agents'. Of Mr. Clark, it was impossible to ask pecuniary assistance, neither was it practicable to go unprovided with money into the house of a woman, who she

had been told was struggling with poverty. Her note was addressed to Miss Somers, or in her absence to Miss Holford, requesting that some person from them might be immediately dispatched to Mr. Somers, to inform him that Miss Neville wished him to transmit to her in Oxendon-street, two guineas, being part of what she had left in his hands when last in town. Certain that Somers would understand why she expressed herself in this manner, and not doubting that his daughter would be the person dispatched to him, she considered the two guineas as already in her possession. This being the day of the week on which the presence of Somers was required in town, no apprehension of her present application being unsuccessful ever entered her mind. Buoyed up with this hope, she cheerfully partook of the bachelor's dinner, feeling more abundantly gratified at his table, dining off a plain joint,

because of the hearty good-will testified by her landlord, than she had frequently done, seated at boards loaded with every delicacy of the season, where the cloud on the brow of her host or hostess contradicted the words which flowed from their lips. Fearful of delay, Miss Neville, as soon as the cloth was withdrawn, rose to depart; expeditious, however, as she believed herself to have been, she had to lament, that she had not arrived at Mrs. Baker's a few minutes sooner. Miss Holford had been there, and left in writing an apology for not having it in her power to send as far as Henrietta-street. Miss Somers had gone to her father's at Brentford a few days before, much indisposed, and in her absence Miss Holford had little leisure for going out, except to wait on her customers; but she intended being at Brentford on Sunday, when she would deliver Miss Neville's message to Mr.

Somers, and doubted not his immediate attention to it.

“ That will be too late,” articulated Constantia, faintly ; “ I can wait no longer for a message from Conolly ; if, however, himself, or the person entrusted with the bill, should refuse to deliver it to Mrs. Baker, they should know at what hour to call to-morrow, with a certainty of finding me here. Ere she had written the first line, the clock struck three, and a smart rap at the door followed the last stroke of the clock. So often, while sitting alone in Mrs. Baker’s parlour, had the heart of Constantia vibrated at the sound of the knocker, and so repeatedly had expectation been defeated, that though she listened attentively to the voice of the inquirer, and was pretty confident that its tones were familiar to her ear, as well as that her own name was pronounced, yet she could not trust the evidence of her senses, till she saw

Conolly standing before her, respectfully taking her hand, and asking with impassioned tenderness how she had been since he saw her. As she attempted to speak, the words died away upon her tongue. Conolly begged her to be seated, and to confide to him the cause of her agitation ; reproaching her in a kind tone, for not granting him permission to wait upon her at Hampstead, as he supposed she must have received his letter of Monday, acquainting her with his arrival. Dread of the style of this letter being too familiar for a third person to peruse, without being led to put constructions on the writer's intentions not likely to be justified by the event (and concluding that in her absence all letters would be opened) Constantia felt a sudden chill come over her. Comprehending the nature of her sensations, Conolly assumed an air of indifference, saying, " It is of little consequence into whose hands

my epistle falls; for it merely expressed a wish to know if you had heard from my friend Neville; that I hoped you were well, your humble servant being so, and your's to command.—Come, let us proceed to business; that you may have no trouble in discounting my bill, I have brought you the cash.”

“ You are very good,” at last faltered Miss Neville; “ I assure you nothing short of extreme necessity could have induced me to make application at your agents.”

“ I believe it; but explain to me what it is that you mean to do. Your note written at Serjeant's-Inn, says, that you have left Hampstead with no view of returning thither. Where can I see you at five o'clock? for I have broken away from a gentleman with whom I have business of consequence to settle; but when I have dispatched him, I will take a mutton-chop, and return to attend you where you please,

or to render you any service that you may require. In your brother's absence, consider me as his representative ; and though I think him a sad dog for not paying more attention to your accommodation ; yet, as he has some good points about him, we must hope for his reformation, and not judge too harshly of his proceedings."

Reassured by these proofs of kind consideration, accompanied by the most delicate behaviour, Constantia, after briefly explaining how she was circumstanced, observed, that she must leave Oxendon-street immediately, the distance to Mrs. Younger's being so great.

" You cannot go there alone, and upon an uncertainty ; I must see you safely lodged ; so pray have the goodness to remain till the hour I mentioned ; if possible, I will be here before it." Saying these words, Conolly hurried away, leaving Miss Neville to

ponder on the events of the last six hours, in which small space of time had been crowded more adventures (and some of an extraordinary nature) than she had experienced in as many years.

“ How little do we know ourselves when we form resolutions ;” thought Constantia ! “ when I last parted with Captain Conolly, if any person had told me that I should have sought him on his arrival, or that I should have voluntarily agreed to let him become my protector, and to seek for lodgings where I wish to be secluded from all observation, I should have asked, if they had calculated at what time of the moon such a phenomenon would be seen ?”

“ And yet such things have happened without my having lost any of my senses, or believing, on reflection, that I have acted improperly. May the issue prove that I have not ! and though

I may never see Conolly after this day, I shall love his country for his sake."

The interval till his arrival she employed in writing to Somers a brief abstract of her proceedings, referring him to Mr. Clark for her address, hinting, that she hoped to be accommodated in the house of Mrs. Younger, whose plain simple manners, when her brother's house-keeper, he must recollect.

Captain Conolly kept his appointment, bringing a coach to convey Miss Neville to West Place. Before she set out, she told Mrs. Baker, that she should require the use of her parlour from a very early hour the following morning till three o'clock; and begged that if a porter brought a parcel directed for her, she would pay him for the carriage, and take care of it till her return. During their ride, the Captain evidently strove to repress a warmth of manner which was natural to him when

tête-à-tête with a fair lady. His travelling companion felt that her gratitude had banished restraint; she conversed with him on the subject of his late tour through his native country with the same ease that she would have done in her brother's drawing-room, or in any place equally respectable. When they stopped on the Kennington-road, at the corner of some palings, Constantia was going to ask where West Place was, till she saw a post having a finger pointing, with this direction, *To West Place, and to ———'s Nursery Garden*. In less than a minute she came to a house, over the gate leading to which was written, *Younger, Stone Mason*. A little boy playing on the grass-plat before the window, lifted the latch of the gate, and answered, that Mammy was within doors, who, coming forward, was surprised to discern Miss Neville. The Captain, much struck with the privacy and pleasantness of

the place, said to his friend in a half whisper; " It will do ; but go in and view the accommodation." A bargain was soon concluded.

" All preliminaries being adjusted," said the Captain, " I will wish you a good evening, and look in about one to-morrow in Oxendon-street; you will be there, I presume, at that hour."

" Most certainly, when I shall be happy to see you."

The air of stillness which pervaded every object, both animate and inanimate, seemed to Miss Neville a complete contrast to the bustling scenes in which she had lately made so conspicuous a figure. Mrs. Younger wore that look of resigned dejection which told more forcibly that her son was fatherless and herself a widow, than even the weeds which she wore. Though the house itself was perfect neatness, all without doors resembled the garden

of the sluggard. A little workshop at one corner of it, in which lay pieces of unfinished work, the implements of masonry, and fragments of stone about the door, spoke most audibly to the spectator, that the master was no more. Mrs. Younger, observing that the attention of her fair lodger was awakened, and that she might, without fear of offending, talk of her own sorrows, unfolded such a little history of losses and crosses since she had been a wife, that Constantia no longer wondered at her want of exertion to render the outward part of her habitation comfortable.

“ Ah ! ” continued Mrs. Younger, “ I deserved it all to be sure ; for I was headstrong, and would not mind my brother, who was always a kind friend to me ; and though he disapproved of my marriage, and would not lend Mr. Younger money when he asked him, he recommended him to business, and never heard of our being

straitened without sending or bringing me a supply. I doubt not but he will yet prove a father to George."

This drew tears from the eyes of both relator and hearer. Miss Neville perceiving that it was the lot of man to taste affliction, wisely determined that she would exert herself to banish all gloomy reflections on her own future destination, hoping that she should in time be enabled to say with the Apostle of the Hebrews: "Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

By a little after seven the next morning, was Constantia at her breakfast. Anxious to reach the Haymarket before the streets were frequented by passengers, she tripped hastily away, absorbed in thought, when in crossing a street, her foot struck against a stone, and in a moment she was prostrate on the earth. Stunned by the fall, she lay

powerless ; and perceiving some male passengers near her, concluded that they would assist her to rise. The tenor of their discourse proved that they thought her little worthy of compassion; and while she raised herself with difficulty, she endeavoured to forgive their inhumanity, owning that appearances were much against her, and that every heart must be rendered callous by seeing a healthy-looking young woman in a dress so unbefitting the hour, and apparently in a state of inebriation. Humbled to the soul at experiencing such mortifying neglect, and at perceiving how completely her garments would confirm suspicions, she forgot her resolution to preserve equanimity of temper under every shock, and, though walking on (for she had sustained no hurt from the stumble) her tears flowed copiously. At last the ground was trod over ; and, seated in Mrs. Baker's parlour, she sought to re-

gain the composure of the preceding night, that she might be sufficiently collected before the arrival of Mr. Lambton, to give him all the necessary information not contained in the written documents already in his possession.

The warmth of this gentleman, and his zeal for her interest, of which he gave too convincing proofs for her to doubt its being real, soon restored the drooping spirits of Constantia; while she related one part of her distress, owing to her not getting a change of clothes, which, though apparently trivial, was, by its consequences, rendered of importance. He consoled her by observing, that without such deprivation of comforts we were not able to set a true value on the advantages attendant on our respective situations. "Now," added he, facetiously, "when you make your toilet to-morrow, you will discern such a change in your appearance, that instead of fancying you

have lost any of your beauty by the buffetings you have experienced, you will think yourself improved by them."

"My fancy must be a very vivid one, Sir, if I draw such conclusions after consulting my looking-glass. I perceive, however, that you are resolved to pay me a compliment of some kind, and as truth would be so glaringly violated by an attempt to praise me as I now appear, you are willing to take a peep into futurity, in order to accomplish your point; you have told me that I shall hear from you at West Place, by twelve to-morrow; perhaps your letter, or rather its contents, may possess magical powers for lighting up my countenance beyond what I hope for at present; but to no other adventitious cause do I look for aid in so short a space of time."

"Well, well, young lady," returned Mr. Lambton, rising, "only take care

of your health, and be not over anxious. I dare say we shall have all our propositions agreed to ; and next week you may come and visit us at Clapton, or go where you like ; so good-bye, and remember not to walk from hence ; a hackney-coach is sometimes a convenient vehicle."

Constantia was soon at liberty to return to her lodging. Captain Conolly arrived immediately on the departure of Mr. Lambton ; and his manner was more reserved than on the preceding day, but still friendly. He declared himself to be full of business, in fitting out his ship for India, in which he intended to take a voyage that he hoped would be the last he should be under the necessity of undertaking ; for he wished most ardently to have a *House on shore*, and to lead a more regular life than he had hitherto done. Miss Neville again thanked him for the services he had rendered her, and ordered the

servant to call a coach, that she might shorten an interview which now became embarrassing. As it drew up to the door, the porter of Mr. Orme arrived with her clothes, and a letter from his master, explaining the various causes which had delayed the delivery of them. That they were now in her possession, was a matter of no small importance to their owner, who being handed by Captain Conolly into the *leathern conveniency*, politely wished him good morning, without saying that she would be happy to see him at West Place. The truth was, that she had been not a little piqued at his studied periods, and the evident pains which he took to convince her that he had no view of paying attentions which would lead to matrimony.

“ Whatever may have produced this coldness on his part,” thought Constantia, “ I can never forget how essential his services were in the hour of distress,

nor his respectful affectionate behaviour while his presence was necessary. A man of his ungovernable passions and libertine principles ought to have due praise for thus subduing the one, and forgetting the other, from a fear of wounding the delicacy of a child of misfortune." This reflection recalled to her mind the time when the winning attentions of the sailor had made no small impression on her heart. Reverting to the state of her feelings on perceiving that his total want of religion, and free notions respecting women, would render him a very unfit companion for her to pass through life with, she congratulated herself on having made this discovery previous to any change in her circumstances; as she might otherwise have relied on his affection for extricating her from her difficulties, believing that a man who truly loved would rejoice in an opportunity of proving the extent of his attach-

ment for the object by whom it was excited.

Thus does the heart, unvitiated by corrupt example, glowing with the love of virtue, and fraught with the most generous sensibilities, believe, that the conduct of others will be governed by the same impulses that itself finds resistless.

Captain Conolly was not a little subdued by the personal attractions of Constantia, neither was he insensible to the beauties of her mind. He had, however, still a stronger attachment to his own convenience than to either. Seldom had he thought seriously of matrimony; he had, indeed, found most of the sex who were the objects of his pursuit so attainable on easier terms, that he had generally embarked for India sated with British beauty, and his purse not a little lightened by sacrificing at its shrine. To enjoy himself in visiting his native country, Bath,

and other places of public resort in England, he had yielded the command of his ship for one voyage to his chief mate, who had the promise of one to himself on his return. The free access he had obtained to the house of Montagu Neville, gave him ample opportunity for observing the good management of his sister, and her unremitting attention to her guests. Many times he had wished it were possible for him to be possessed of such a retreat, with Miss Neville lady president of his table.

The rank, however, which she held in society, the correctness of her conduct, and the justness of her modes of thinking, forbidding him to hope that this invaluable blessing could be obtained in any other way than by a sacrifice of his liberty, he contrived to banish this reflection as often as it occurred, sipping, without fear, large draughts of love from the intelligent countenance

and fascinating conversation of his mistress. It was on discovering the embarrassed state of his friend's affairs, who he plainly perceived was a ruined man, that one evening, "being hot with the Tuscan grape," he ventured to express sentiments that discovered to Constantia his real character. The change in her behaviour to him from this night, while it repressed all hope of subduing the fortress, by lulling the advanced guard into security, did not extinguish his passion. When absent from the object, the recollection increased esteem, and this produced the friendly letter on hearing that his friend had suddenly embarked for the West Indies.

His subsequent conduct may be accounted for in a few words. On his first interview, the estimable parts of his composition shone forth, and incited him to act as a man of feeling and sentiment ought to have done.

Left afterwards to counsel with his own thoughts, the insight into the characters of women with which his intercourse with them had furnished him, led to a conclusion that Miss Neville had formed some designs to ensnare him into a declaration of the attachment which he was well convinced she must know she had inspired. Although he had entertained no aversion to marriage, and cared little for the portion he might receive with the woman whom he should choose to select as a companion for life, at the same time he did not like the idea of running the risk of being accepted merely from gratitude, or possibly to avoid the mortifications attendant on a state of dependence.

In this instance Captain Conolly was certainly not wholly to be blamed. Fond of his profession, and undetermined as to the practicability of relinquishing it, 'twas, undoubtedly, of

much consequence to his future happiness, to endeavour to ascertain the motives by which any lady was actuated in receiving his addresses ; for he well knew, that his own impetuosity and ardency of temperament, could not endure to live long with any person to whom he was indifferent, or who did not consider his approbation as of the highest importance. The independence of mind and superiority of understanding of Miss Neville, he sometimes considered as no great acquisition in a wife ; for, unless used with great moderation, her husband must in her presence frequently appear a secondary character. The result of the [night's deliberation produced the over-strained behaviour which so completely checked the affection that was spontaneously rising in the bosom of his mistress.

Mr. Lambton's communications were of such a kind as to banish every melancholy idea from the mind of his cli-

ent. He assured her, that she was completely exonerated from all claims, but those trifling debts contracted by herself; and that all those who had given her credit were disposed to wait her own time, not excepting the vindictive Mr. Linton, who had certainly taken out a writ against her, though much ashamed of his precipitation, now that he learned how much of her own property she had sacrificed in order to preserve the credit of her brother. Freed from apprehension in going out to take the air, and furnished with necessaries (in which were included a few books, with her port-folio and crayons), Constantia determined to remain for the present with Mrs. Younger, who derived no small pleasure from seeing her lodger so satisfied under a reverse of fortune, which she supposed would have had a very different effect.

CHAP. XXII.

What dreadful havock in the human breast
The passions make, when unconfin'd and mad,
They burst unguided by the mental eye ;
The light of reason, which in various ways
Points them to good, or turns them back from ill !

THOMSON.

I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments, and
Virtue has no tongue to check her pride.

MILTON.

CONSTANTIA, wearied with fruitless expectation of hearing again from her friend the lawyer, suddenly resolved on going to the house of business, choosing the hour when most of her acquaintance would be at dinner, lest she might meet any whose enquiries would distress her feelings ; though in doing this, she deprived herself of the chance of seeing Mr. Lambton, who seldom was to be met with in

town later than four o'clock. Her enquiry, therefore, to the man who opened the door was, whether Mr. Dornford was at home. On being answered in the affirmative, she was ushered into the room where she had formerly spoken to that gentleman, which was now empty. After a few moments waiting, she was requested to walk up stairs.

In a decently furnished dining-room, she found Mr. Dornford sedulously poring over some parchments lately written. He begged her excuse for being obliged to continue his employment; for the papers that he was revising were relative to a cause in which he was engaged, and which was to come on in the Court of King's Bench the following morning. "Do not, however, my dear young lady," continued Mr. Dornford, "imagine that your business has been neglected. When this is dispatched, you shall have

every information in my power to give ; in the meantime, you will allow me to request the attendance of the lady whose affairs now engross my attention ; and perhaps while we are perusing these, to you uninteresting, pieces of tautology, you will do me the favour of making tea for us."

Constantia bowed assent ; and there entered the room a tall meagre female, who had long been verging to fifty, and whose habiliments might come under the description of shabby genteel. The expression of her countenance would have served a physiognomist, who was ambitious of portraying from nature, for an inimitable representation of a virago disappointed in the accomplishment of a favourite wish. She scarcely returned the obliging salutation of the new-comer, apparently not a little vexed at the interruption which her visit had occasioned.

With the most perfect *sang froid*, the indefatigable Mr. Dornford renewed his task, disclosing to the astonished Constantia, that the figure before her had been cast in an action brought against her, for assaulting on the high road the person of a young female relation, whom she had accused of having, by various arts, inveigled from her the regards of a gentleman, with whom she had for years resided as superintendant of his domestic concerns; having also the care of his children by his wife, who, when living, had been her particular friend. The attachment subsisting between the ancient spinster and her protector, it appeared from her statement, was founded on the purest Platonism; yet she owned that he was disturbed when she admitted of any tender attentions from the other sex in his presence. Inflated by the consciousness of her superior pretensions, this good lady had the temerity to in-

troduce into the family of the widower, a blooming niece of her own, to whom, as a compliment to the aunt, Mr. Horwood granted the permission of residing in his house, and having a seat at his table, on her undertaking the plain-work of the family.

The lady of forty-five sometimes wore a frown on her countenance, when the open brow of twenty-five was placid. The senior would talk of her *rights*, when the junior assumed none, save that of contributing to the enjoyments of those who afforded her protection by an obliging demeanour and cheerful conversation. Comparisons are odious; yet, in spite of ourselves, we draw them. The niece had long been a patient hearer of all her aunt's complaints against Mr. Horwood's violence of temper, &c. &c. but her acquiescence in their justice was no longer to be obtained.

One night, when the good lady, at

the conclusion of her philippic, demanded a positive assent to the truths she had been demonstrating, her voice was so loud as to draw Mr. Horwood from his library. He demanded to know the cause of the altercation. Neither lady being very ready to state her grievances, Mr. Horwood took the tone of advising his *chere amie* to be more gentle in her expressions to a young person, in whose welfare she was so interested, and who had no friend but her.

“ Yes, Sir, she has another ;” replied the enraged Miss Norcliffe, “ you are her protector ; but this moment shall decide her fate ; either *she* or *I*, quit your house to-morrow.”

“ As you please, madam, replied Mr. Horwood ; but for this night your niece shall truly and virtually be under my protection ; and to put it out of your power to hurt her feelings more than you have already done, I shall

place her in the apartment with my daughters. Your regard for their repose, will not allow you to commit any act of violence there."

Saying these words, he led the weeping Amelia (how irresistible is youth and beauty in tears !) out of the parlour to a chamber within that occupied by the Miss Horwoods ; and after ordering a servant to carry her what was requisite, to make it comfortable for the night, he locked the door, putting the key in his pocket, and retiring to his own chamber, without making one inquiry respecting his ten years' companion.

To rest, however, was not her intention. She employed herself in packing up her clothes, in giving a faithful account of what had been entrusted to her care, and above all, in sealing up in packets what she considered as the insignia of her office, viz. keys of various kinds, also in writing a scurrilous

letter to her quondam friend, accusing him of seducing her niece from her duty, and using herself in a most shameful and unjustifiable manner. Self-assured that her influence over Mr. Horwood was unbounded, and that she would be recalled in triumph, to exercise a more absolute dominion than ever, she left Harlow in a post-chaise by six o'clock in the morning, to the no small amusement of the servants, who had witnessed the paroxysms of her rage the preceding night.

It would appear that this lady had been as little conversant with the human heart, as her conduct proved she was with the graces peculiar to the female character.

Mr. Horwood, so far from meditating a reconciliation, felt himself by her absence relieved from a burthen which of late had become intolerable. Amelia was as fit to have the charge of his children as her aunt, and certainly pos-

sessed many more requisites for rendering his home comfortable to himself. "The conscious Muse," cannot unfold what it does not know. That Platonism was the basis on which the regard for either aunt or niece was founded, must always be doubtful, as no positive proofs to the contrary were ever adduced to the public. The brief of Miss Norcliffe did certainly state, that Mr. Horwood had, some years preceding the separation, made proposals of marriage to her, which were accepted; and that it was in consequence of this mutual good understanding, that she became invested in his house with the authority of its late mistress. Now, as she exercised some of the *rights* of a *wife*, it is not drawing an unfair inference to imagine that he also asserted those of a *husband*. He certainly now resolved to be master of his own household, to whom he gave orders, that, in his absence, Miss Nor-

cliffe was on no pretext to be admitted within his doors. That lady, finding no enquiries made respecting her, sent to demand the remainder of her baggage, which was immediately surrendered; and she then most determinedly took her station in the same village, by hiring an apartment to reside in, from whence she fulminated dire sounds of wrath and vengeance, which awakened as little attention from the parties at whom they were levelled, as would be paid by the crowned heads of Europe, at the close of the present century, to the bulls of the Pope or the decrees of the Vatican. She had this only consolation, that she had not been deposed. Her abdication, we have however seen, somewhat resembled a premier's resignation of his power and places to his sovereign, after having found himself in the minority of the House of Commons.

. One year did the enraged female

watch for an opportunity of satiating her fury—One year did the defenceless Amelia adhere to Mr. Horwood's injunctions, of not stirring from the pales of his garden, excepting in a carriage, or under his protection. No longer could she withstand the temptation of procuring at the circulating-library, a book which she feared to trust to the hands of a servant, lest the Miss Horwoods might see the title, and from ignorance, name it in the presence of their father. At the time when she concluded to a certainty, that her aunt would be engaged in the company of Spadille, Manille, and their numerous confederates, did the luckless damsel take the road to the shop of the humble imitator of Mr. Lane, whose obsequious politeness soon procured her the wished-for publication. Returning in security, as she believed, anticipating the pleasure of her mental banquet, she was forcibly detained, while two

strong arms, grasping each shoulder, shook her trembling frame almost to atoms; then, while one hand twisted her flowing ringlets, did the other with force horrific, deal well-directed blows on her face and neck, till the piercing scream of the vanquished fair drew forth Mr. Pestle, the village surgeon, whose athletic arm could hardly rescue the fainting fair one from the fell gripe of her revengeful relative.

Amid the execrations of those who witnessed the scene, did Miss Norcliffe utter the voice of exultation, she then quietly returned homewards. Amelia having been, by the humanity of Mr. Pestle, and his neighbours, assisted into his surgery, she was by him let blood, and, after taking proper restoratives, was conveyed home in the carriage of one of his patients, accompanied by himself.

This sketch of Miss Norcliffe's aggression, was collected from conversa-

tion, and the facts stated in Mr. Horwood's brief, which were so far substantiated by the testimony of Mr. Pestle and others, as to induce the jury to give their verdict in favour of the plaintiff. The object of the present appeal was, to awaken compassion for the deserted forlorn condition of the defendant, so as to obtain a mitigation of damages; for, though Mr. Horwood, in consideration of former intimacy, had offered to withdraw the suit on condition of receiving no further molestation from the party, she had positively insisted on coming into court, unless he would see her in the presence of witnesses, which she named. Mr. Horwood having no desire for engaging in a war of words, as resolutely refused the meeting.

The papers having undergone the necessary examination, Mr. Dornford, while the company were sipping their tea, again urged Miss Norcliffe to an

accommodation. Her answers were like her actions, virulent in the extreme.

“ You may wish you had hearkened to reason, when you are lodged in a prison,” said Mr. Dornford, with provoking calmness.

“ A prison, Sir !”

“ Why, yes, five or six hundred pounds will be a sum not very easily raised. You know that the law-expences themselves, amount to near a hundred pounds; not that *we* shall distress you, (casting a significant glance, while he spoke, at Constantia,) but counsel must be feed, and you know Mr. De Eresby has given your cause an uncommon degree of attention, though had he been as well apprised of the attendant circumstances as this company is, I know not whether he would have been so ardent an advocate; for he is a little squeamish about undertaking the side of the *oppressor*. You made him believe that you were the *oppressed*.”

“And so I am,” replied Miss Norcliffe, while her eyes seemed ready to start from their sockets; “and if I am trampled upon still more, the whole world shall hear of my injuries. I appeal to yourself, Did I want any counsel? Did I not wish to have pleaded my cause in person?”

“Truly, I do recollect,” rejoined Mr. Dornford, “that you did deliver sentiments to that effect; but my Lord Kenyon and the judges are not obliged to listen to the complaints of women, as attornies are. Do you think you would not have been appalled in their presence? Do you imagine, that in the court of King’s Bench you would have been as voluble as you are in this apartment?”

To this interrogatory the lady chose not to reply; but she declared that her employment in prison should be writing letters, explaining her treatment to every inhabitant of the parish of——,

which she would leave open, that the Postman might read them; in order that the relations of her friend Mrs. Horwood, might know into what hands her children had fallen, and to what purposes were appropriated the sums, which the trustees of her estate so liberally allowed for their maintenance and education. Constantia here endeavoured to convince her of the impotency of her resentment, and advised her to think of forgiveness of enemies as one of the virtues of the Christian character, without practising which we could have no hope of mercy ourselves.

“ Christian!” repeated Miss Norcliffe, “ I am no Christian—I am a Deist.”

Constantia involuntarily shuddered; but endeavoured to repress her astonishment, asking Mr. Dornford if she should pour him out another dish of

tea? At this moment Mr. De Eresby was announced.

As soon as the bustle occasioned by his entrance had subsided, Miss Norcliffe attacked Constantia on the principles of religion, not doubting to foil her by a torrent of words. Here, however, she was mistaken. Though unwilling to enter the lists, yet when our heroine found herself called upon to prove the efficacy of those doctrines, the practice of which she had recommended, she failed not declare, that she had been placed in situations of difficulty and danger, from which she must have shrunk back appalled, but for the consolations she had derived from an early religious education; and as she had in vain endeavoured to discover the advantages resulting to mankind from the introduction of the new philosophy, she could not but deem the propagation of its tenets

pernicious to the interests of society, and that every thinking person ought to unite with heart and hand in endeavouring to counteract their effects.

“What,” says the disciple of Wollstoncraft, “have you not heard of the happiness diffused by the philosophers of France?”

“I have heard,” (replied Constantia, modestly, fearing that the gentlemen who were listeners, particularly the stranger, might censure her for continuing the discourse) “of the inordinate pride of the French noblesse, of the immorality of the court of Louis, and of the glaring impiety of the French writers, both in his and the preceding reign. These enormities have called down the vengeance of Heaven on a devoted nation; but I might as well consider the executioner who rids the world of a traitor, an object of veneration, as to award any praise to murderous villains, like Mirabeau, Marat,

Robespierre, &c. The pious monarch on the scaffold, holds up an edifying example to suffering virtue. Never was he in his life, so truly capable of inspiring affection and respect, as in that trying moment. Whatever imbecility had formerly attached to his character, his conduct then for ever obliterates it."

"You perhaps, then," with a sneer, rejoined Miss Norcliffe, "can with the same ease, compose a panegyric on the virtues of Marie Antionette!"

"No, Madam," continued Constancia; "I deplore her dreadful end, while I acknowledge that she tempted her fate by her own licentious conduct when in the zenith of her power. But was she not, on that very account, so much the more an object of pity, having to contend with the tortures of self-reproach, as well as the taunts of a vindictive cruel enemy?" Miss Norcliffe asked in the same tone as before,

“ Does Christianity teach, that vices like her’s should be tolerated, because practised by a crowned head? Passive obedience, and the indefeasible rights of kings, would be carried to a great height indeed, if the people were not allowed to avenge their own cause by sacrificing such monsters.”

“ But, Madam,” said Constantia, in reply, “ you wander from the subject. I am no advocate for immorality. Though Christianity teaches me to give thanks to God for not having formed me with desires, the gratification of which would endanger my repose, and for having placed me in that moderate sphere of life, which makes it incumbent on me to keep my passions under perpetual restraint; yet while I shudder at the enormities committed by the Queen of France, unless I had been placed in similar situations, possessing her beauty, rank, and fascinating manners, and also had my principles vi-

tiated by the same pernicious mode of education,—I have no right to say, that I should have acted differently; I hope, however, for the honour of the sex, that only once in an age such a woman is suffered to appear. What surprises me is, that one of the Godwin school should consider the pursuit of happiness as reprehensible. I thought your principle was, to seek pleasure in all forms. This was the extent of Marie Antionette's moral offences; her political ones I am not so competent to decide upon, though I do not find that on her trial any proof was brought forward, to warrant the sentence passed upon her."

"That is because you read it, determined not to be convinced," said Miss Norcliffe, spitefully; "What say you on the subject, Mr. De Eresby?"

"My sentiments you are already acquainted with," answered the counsellor; "I am impatient to hear that

lady's, who, I flatter myself, will favour us so far as to continue a subject on which she appears so well informed, and to make such excellent observations for the edification of us all."

Constantia bowed and proceeded.

" I assure you, Sir, when I reflect on the luxurious manner in which the Queen had lived; the adoration that her beauty and elegance excited; her unbounded influence over all whom she attempted to sway, contrasted with her forlorn deserted condition as a prisoner in the Temple, compelled to view the ghastly visage of her beloved and faithful Lamballe, with the train of cruelties afterwards practised on her; I dare venture to hope, that her sins were all expiated by her sufferings on earth, and that the moment of her death was the first of real happiness that her spirit had ever been permitted to taste. I cannot, however, think so favourably of her judges;

and those are the people whom you (turning to Miss Norcliffe) deem the benefactors of the human race. You know that one of our sentimental female writers thought as you do; perhaps her confinement in one of the prisons of Paris, for no crime but being a friend of the wife of the Ex-Minister Roland, may have caused her to alter her opinion, and made her wish to regain that respectable rank in society which she once held in her native country."

"Well said, my practical philosopher," cried Mr. Dornford; I think I must put this young man under your care; for I believe his system of ethics wants a little of your correction; however, let us remember that our time is precious. I have much to communicate to you, which may be of importance. While Miss Norcliffe and Mr. De Eresby look over these parchments below, we may proceed to business.

Miss Norcliffe's stately walk out of the room may be better imagined than it can be described. If, however, she wished the acquaintance to end as it began, her Counsel was as eager to pursue it. He, therefore, on retiring, said that he should wait to see Mr. Dornford after Miss Norcliffe was gone home, in order to fix the hour of meeting for the morning. The supplicatory look which he cast at Mr. Dornford might have been translated,—“ I hope you will contrive to make my assistance necessary ;” while his glance at the fair lady implied,—“ Command my services, and you do me honour.”

Much as Constantia had dreaded an investigation of her brother's affairs, after the hints of Somers, little did she expect to hear so lamentable an account as that now furnished by Mr. Dornford. The particulars, though unknown to her, having been already communicated to my readers, a reca-

pitulation is unnecessary, though I must observe, that, trifling as the loss of the few articles of plate were, when compared to others she had sustained, she felt that most keenly, considering its near affinity to a breach of trust, of which she had believed it impossible that her brother could have been guilty. The furniture being advertised for sale, it was necessary for her to return to Hampstead, to pack up her clothes and remove those articles belonging to herself, which she wished to reserve. The produce of the sale, she trusted, would free her from debt; and her claims being admitted, she would receive her dividend with the other creditors, when remittances enabled the persons empowered to receive money and collect debts, to make a distribution. In the interim she must endeavour to support herself by the employment of her talents, or by endeavouring to procure

a situation as governess in a family, or some other equally eligible. Subdued by a sense of her unprotected state, and the dangers to which she might be exposed, she could scarcely bear her part in the conversation.

The entrance of Mr. De Eresby made her strive to check the starting tear, while Mr. Dornford endeavoured to call her attention from her own sorrows, by asking him if he thought Miss Norcliffe really meant to go into Court; for he was sure that none of her friends, who had promised to attend her to Westminster-Hall, would go a step beyond the coffee-house, where they expected a compromise would take place.

“She was much more occupied in reflecting on the mortification she had experienced from the good sense of your fair client, than in thinking of her cause after she went from this room,” replied De Eresby. “She

said, Dornford, that you told her Miss Neville was a West Indian, who had been cheated out of her property, which Mr. Lambton and you were trying to recover; and observed, that she expected to see a whey-faced helpless girl, who could scarcely articulate for vexation. Judge, then, Madam, (bowing to Constantia) of her surprise at beholding you, and finding, that with all her smattering of French politicks and French philosophy, she should be afraid of contending with you in argument."

"Indeed, Sir, I can take no merit to myself on the occasion; for Miss Norcliffe was not permitted to dazzle me with the speciousness of her reasoning; Mr. Dornford, in pity to the suspense which he knew I must endure till I had a conference with him, dismissed the lady rather unpolitely. I hope she imputed his behaviour to the true cause."

"She has known me before to-day," replied Mr. Dornford, "and must be certain, that had Mr. Lambton been in town, he would not have allowed me to have bestowed so much time upon her. A general conversation ensued; in which Mr. De Eresby discovered, that Barbadoes was the place of Constantia's birth.

"I dare hardly ask you, Madam," said he, "whether you knew a gentleman of my name there; he must have died before your recollection could serve you."

"Did *you* know him?" exclaimed Constantia, eagerly. "Never while *I* have breath shall *I* forget my beloved, long-lamented preceptor; surely you are not his son! No; there is not a trace of his countenance in your's."

"By adoption I was," replied the astonished De Eresby; "but who my parents were I am to this moment ignorant; I was stolen from them by

savages, by whom I was for three years nurtured with care and kindness; and when, by the fortune of war, I was again brought among Europeans, my parents were dead, at least no traces of them remained; and but for the humanity of the gentleman whose name I bear, I might have become a vagabond. On his departure from New York, to take possession of his appointment in your island, he sent me for my education to England, where he, fortunately for me, pitched on Mr. Lambton, as the friend to whose care he chose I should be committed. Mr. Dornford can testify, that I have, in him, found a father; yet when I think that I never had an opportunity of proving my gratitude to my first benefactor, I am often overwhelmed with grief. Tell me, dearest lady! the particulars of his death, and why the mention of his name has thrown you into such agitation."

Constantia, in the best manner she was able, explained her intimate connection with the deceased, with all the circumstances attending his death, as related in the fourth chapter. Need it be added, that this explanation made the parties feel more on the footing of intimacy in the space of one hour, than, on a common introduction, they would perhaps have been in twelve months? Mr. Dornford sympathised most sincerely with Miss Neville, as all who had hearts to feel for the woes of a fellow-creature must have done, more especially when they discovered that her mind repelled the attacks of misfortune, and that her talents shone forth in situations where the mental and bodily powers of nine-tenths of her sex would have been enfeebled. Impressed with these sentiments towards his fair client, he rejoiced to perceive her spirits revived by conversing with De Eresby on the

incidents of her youth; and, willing to prolong the pleasure which apparently both his friends enjoyed in each other's society, he desired the gentleman to escort Miss Neville through the city, and as much farther as she would permit him. This proposal being agreeable to all parties, Constantia wished Mr. Dornford a good evening, fully persuaded that her beau was the Highlander whose conversation had engrossed so much of her attention at Mrs. Rochford's masquerade, and that he was at Brighton while she was confined to the house, first in preparing for the entertainment, and afterwards in nursing its mistress.

“ You will pardon me for asking the question, Miss Neville,” said De Eresby, “ but were you not on a visit to Mrs. Rochford in Sussex three summers ago?”

“ Yes, Sir, I was; and saw you on

an occasion when her house was thrown open for the reception of masks."

" You recollect me then; and I am convinced that I have now found the sprightly Pilgrim whose vivacity and wit were so universally praised by those who had the good fortune to be admitted to converse with her."

" I do not deny, Sir, that I wore the habit of a Pilgrim, or that I entered with spirit into the entertainments of the evening; it was the only masquerade that I ever attended, and being held on a spot so well known to me, I had no scruples in mixing with the company."

" Little did I imagine, madam, that my visit to Mr. Dornford would have been productive of consequences so pleasant; I flatter myself, that for the sake of the person whose name I bear, you will allow me to have the honour of cultivating your acquaintance. When I solicited this privilege

before, I could urge no other plea in my behalf, than an impulse which I could not resist; and while I lamented that my endeavours to discover who you were, proved fruitless, I acquiesced in the justice of the sentence which I could not reverse."

"If you are the friend of Mr. Lambton, Sir, I doubt not that we shall soon meet at Clapton; at present I am a bird of passage; but whenever I have a settled habitation, I shall feel much pleasure in ranking Mr. De Eresby on my list of visitors."

"You do me honour," said De Eresby, who, however, considered this evasive answer as a polite manner of declining his acquaintance. "Were you not acquainted with Miss Plimpton?" he continued. "She was an excellent mask as a Weird Sister. The lady under whose protection she went to Brighton betrayed this secret the following winter. Miss Plimpton said

some severe things to me, and I believe was equally smart to all who attacked her. She often enquired for you at the library in my hearing, wondering what could keep you so close at home. She told me that the Pilgrim was Lady Selina Ormsby, but her voice wanted those harmonious tones that charmed the hearers of the former; besides, she had not your height."

Constantia, scarcely sensible of the force of De Eresby's expressions of admiration of herself, meditated on the determined malignity of Miss Plimpton with sensations little short of detestation. "Alas!" said she, internally, "she envied me even the tribute of praise bestowed by a stranger, whom, in all probability, I was never to meet again. Her admonitions to me were convincing proofs that she saw through my disguise; and her enquiries respecting my acquaintance at Brighton,

when she called upon me at Hampstead, and cursorily mentioning Mr. De Eresby, shew that she was apprehensive that he had been introduced to me. Poor as I am, how proudly do I feel myself her superior!" This reflection brought her to West Place; when, informing her escort that she was at her journey's end, he bowed and withdrew.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



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